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Essential PlayStation™

Part Three

10
Game Demo Disc

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Essential BLASTING!
ONE Essential CD

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How you can be a better racer

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FEATURING

Formula 1
Die Hard Trilogy
Doom
Wipeout 2097
Tunnel B1
Twisted Metal
Mickey's Wild Adventure
Warhawk
Shellshock
Broken Sword

INSTANT

ACTION!

Discover why **you** need a good blast
Selected: Shoot 'em ups to die for

ARCADE HEROES

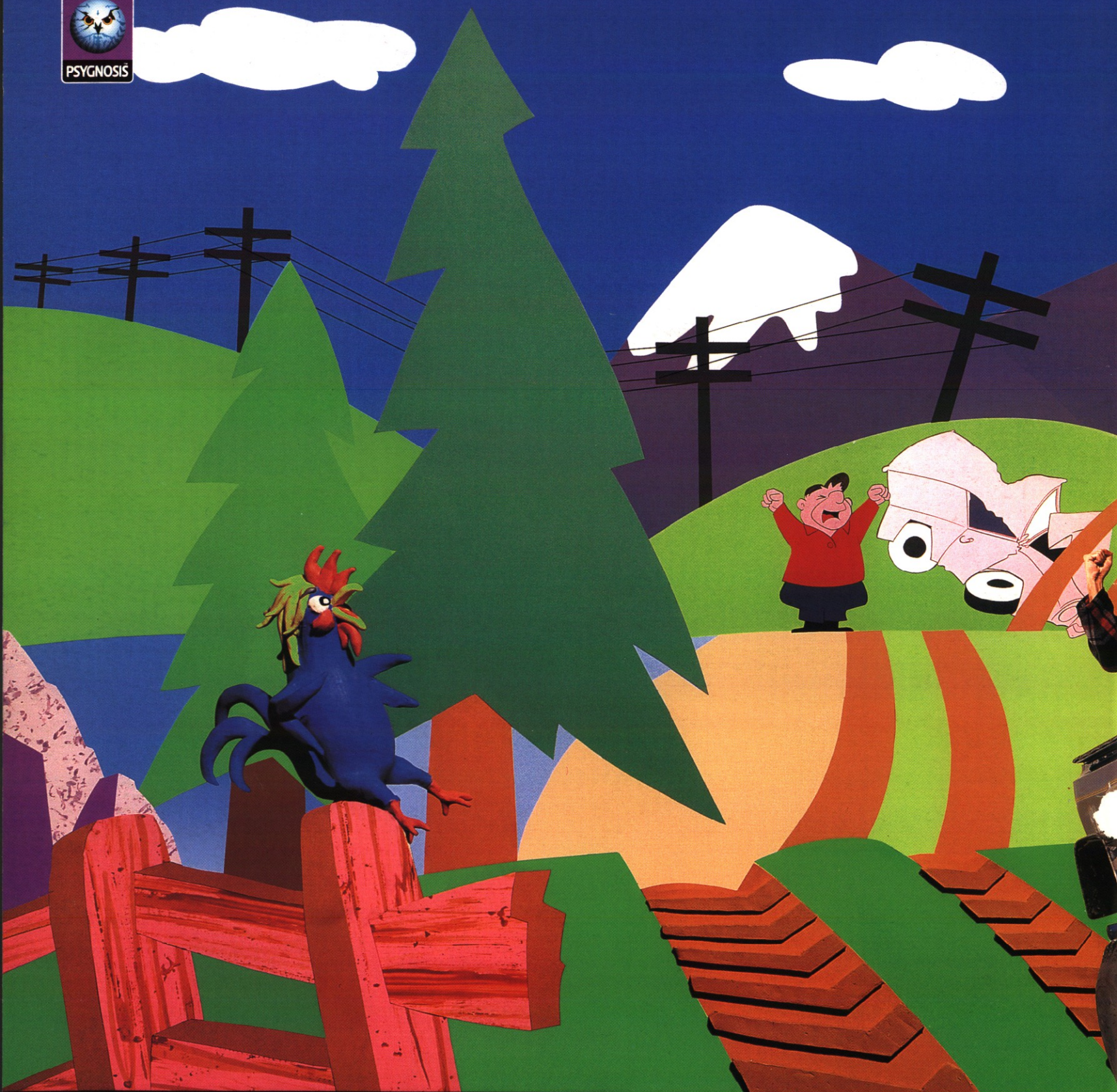
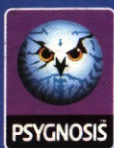
Will '97 be Namco's year?

PLUS! FINAL DOOM, Motor Toon GP2, TEMPEST X, Blam! Machinehead



Future
PUBLISHING





SERIOUS OFF ROADING!

"...QUITE SIMPLY THE BEST 4X4 GAME EVER..." 96% TOTAL PLAYSTATION




PC
CD
ROM



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"SELL YOUR GRANNY AND PLAY
TOBAL NO 1 TILL YOUR FINGERS BLEED".

Play Magazine 94%

TOBAL No. 1™

"The quest mode is a superb addition to the game,
and makes for some late nights as it's really tough to complete"

Mean Machines PlayStation



DO NOT
UNDERESTIMATE
THE POWER
OF PLAYSTATION

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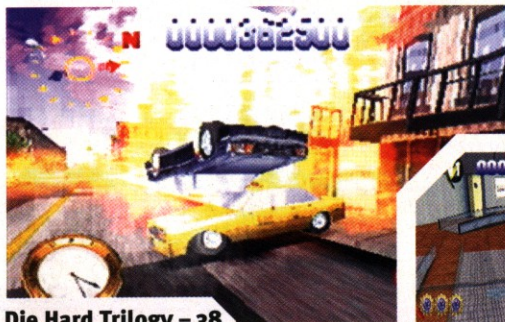
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Racing: It's what your PlayStation was made for. We reveal the past, present and future of everyone's favourite genre and ask, where do racing games go now?



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86, 92 So Retro

It happened to fashion, it happened to music and now it's happened to games: Essential charts the Eighties arcade revival and looks at old PS titles at a stunning new price (yes, just £20!)



6 CD Guide



Details of our CD line-up that includes Die Hard Trilogy, Formula 1, and Doom!



Briefing

b r i e f i n g

Briefing

Briefing

Don't get left behind! **Briefing gets you up to speed:** The games, the history, the hardware, everything you need to know to enter the world of PlayStation

Essential Selection

Advice on how to build-up your own collection of the best games and add-ons.

Essential Story

A fascinating insight into the past, present and future of Sony's wonder machine.

Your Guide to the CD

Key:



Formula 1

- Publisher: Psygnosis
- Style: Racing Simulation
- Price: 49.99

One of the most beautiful games ever to grace Sony's machine, *F1* is the perfect mix of polished graphics and super-slick gameplay. What's so impressive about this Psygnosis masterpiece is that it recreates the feel as well as the look of *Formula 1* racing. On Grand Prix mode you have to brake properly on the corners, follow the racing line and avoid collisions to survive and rise through the rankings. Arcade, on the other hand, offers a more traditional, knock-about style race common in the arcades, allowing you to get away with the most outrageous manoeuvres. Here you get to play just one of the 17 authentic tracks in the game, Germany's Nurburgring, in either mode. The finished game features all the drivers, all the cars and tracks from the '95 season. Awesome. [More on page 22.](#)

- X = Accelerate
- S = Brake
- L1/R1 = Change view



Die Hard Trilogy

- Publisher: Electronic Arts
- Style: 3D Blaster/Driving combat
- Price: 44.99

It sounds too good to be true but *Die Hard Trilogy* really is three quality games for the price of one. The first section of the game is a 3D blaster, letting you fight your way through the corridors and rooms of Nakatomi Plaza, killing hostages and freeing terrorists (sorry, wrong way round) as you go. *Die Harder* is the stage available on our CD, a *Virtua Cop*-style shooting game set in Dulles airport. Not only are there a variety of weapons, a completely destructible environment and amazing effects in this section but you can also pan left and right to seek out the bad guys. The final part of the trilogy is a driving/combat game that has you squealing through the streets of Manhattan defusing bombs and running down civilians. Intense action. [Turn to page 38.](#)

Joypad:

- X = Fire
- D-Pad = Move cross-hairs
- L1 + R1 = Reload

Mouse:

- Left button = Fire
- Left button, then Right button = Reload



Doom

- Publisher: GT Interactive
- Style: 3D Blaster
- Price: 44.99

Regarded by many as the best PlayStation game ever, *Doom* delivers violence, paranoia and horror in unparalleled quantities. The format is fairly basic, you wander around labyrinthine complexes taking on room after room of hellish adversaries with the best range of weapons yet (chainsaws to plasma guns). But it's the execution here that's so impressive. Everything is seen as if through the eyes of your nameless marine character. The controls and graphics conspire to give you the feel of real movement as you walk forwards into the screen or dodge from side to side. This is a slice of pure gaming nightmare that, despite its somewhat dated sprites, appears all too real when you play. Stunning.



- Up = Move forwards
- Down = Move backwards
- Left = Rotate left
- Right = Rotate right
- X = Fire
- O = Open door
- L1/R1 = Change weapons
- L2 /R2 = Sidestep

Wipeout 2097

- Publisher: Psygnosis
- Style: Futuristic racing
- Price: £44.99

Shortly after launch one game showed just how good PlayStation games could be. That game was the original *Wipeout*. 2097 is the souped-up sequel, a follow-up that fine tunes the work of genius that the first *Wipeout* undoubtedly remains. Instead of racing cars, in *Wipeout 2097* you pilot magnetic sleds that hover above the twisting, turning tracks, leaning and taking corners at impossible angles and even more impossible speeds. In this demo you get to try out Gare D'Europa, one of the most difficult circuits. You can choose either Novice or Expert settings (altering the overall speed) and elect to race any of the sleds. Try to pass over as many blue arrows as possible (these speed you up). Although it may seem initially trickier, persevere with the internal view (toggle with Triangle) as it gives you a much better idea of how hard you have to turn into each corner. See page 81 for more tips.



- T = Change weapon
- S = Discard weapon
- O = Fire
- X = Thrust
- R1 = Right airbrake
- L1 = Left airbrake

Tunnel B1

- Publisher: Ocean
- Style: Shoot 'em up
- Price: £44.99

One way to describe *Tunnel B1* is as a cross between two of our other disc games, *Doom* and *Wipeout 2097*. *Tunnel* is a super-fast action game that takes place, rather unusually, underground. While in this demo you're given all your craft's weapons to play with for a full five minutes, the finished item is a much more strategic affair, forcing you to conserve both your energy and your arsenal. What you are bound to appreciate straight-away is the sheer visual exuberance of *Tunnel*'s special effects. Everything explodes in such a satisfying manner that you might be tempted to even blow up crates with radiation warning markings on. If you want the demo to continue, don't. You risk being irradiated for about the next 300,000 years. More on page 28.



- Left = Rotate left
- Right = Rotate right
- T = Activate boosters
- X = Brake/Reverse
- S = Accelerate
- O (plus D-pad) = Strafe
- R1 = Toggle Primary weapons
- R2 = Fire Primary weapons
- L1 = Toggle Secondary weapons
- L2 = Fire secondary weapons
- Up = Primary weapon lock
- Down = Primary Weapon unlock

Twisted Metal

- Publisher: SCE
- Style: Driving combat
- Price: £44.99

Perhaps not as flash as some of the driving games around *Twisted* has one magic ingredient; fun. Simply bomb around a variety of different environments, collecting power-ups and strafing enemy cars whenever you get the chance. The true glory of *Twisted* is probably not to be found in the one-player game that is, unfortunately, rather too short. Where *Twisted Metal* comes into its own is in excellent the two-player split-screen option. Suddenly the slight jaggedness of the vehicles and buildings recedes into the background as you participate in a frantic and particularly fatal game of tag through winding streets and slippery storm drains. A jolly good blast.



- S = Accelerate
- O = Slow down
- T = Turbo
- X = Sharp turn
- L1/R1 = Change weapon
- L2 = Fire cannon
- R2 = Fire special weapon

Mickey's Wild Adventure

- Publisher: SCE
- Style: Platformer
- Price: £44.99

If you fancy a slight respite from this orgy of high-speed violence then you might enjoy a go on a game inspired by Disney's favourite rodent. No complex weapons-swapping or braking is required here (Mickey only has marbles to chuck), instead it's all down to timing your jumps correctly and avoiding swinging into any enemies. The complete game chronicles MM's full movie career, taking in such sights as a giant's mushroom patch, the Mad Doctor's castle and including the original black and white backdrop from his very first cinematic outing, Steamboat Willie. It certainly saves on those tickets to Disneyland™.



- T = Jump
- O = Throw
- X = Jump (again)

Warhawk

- Publisher: SCE
- Style: Shoot 'em up
- Price: £44.99

This special effects frenzy takes blasting into the stratosphere with a hovering aircraft specially designed to level everything on the ground (and

take out any airborne opposition). Showcasing a lot of the lighting and transparency effects that are now the stock-in-trade of the PlayStation shoot 'em up, *Warhawk* still gives an impressive, if limited, blast. There's little strategy to be had here, it's basically a case of if it moves, shoot it and if it doesn't move fire a missile at it because it's probably another ground target. Dated but enjoyable for a while.

- O = Fire cannon
- S = Fire missiles
- T = Change missile type
- X = Afterburner
- R1 = Bank right
- L1 = Bank left
- R2 = Speed up
- L2 = Slow down



Shellshock

- Publisher: Core Design
- Style: Blaster
- Price: £44.99

This is one game that's guaranteed to bring you down to earth with a bump, a blaster that puts you at the controls of a tank trundling around cities and enemy bases. Naturally these aren't deserted, there are plenty of hostile troops and vehicles lurking in side-alleys and lying in wait across bridges. Your task is to clear the entire game area of all unfriendly units. To help you, you've got a long range radar screen that picks up each unit as a tiny blip. Using this it's relatively easy to home-in on the enemy and give them a solid pounding. Verdict on page 78.



- T = Tactical map
- O = Change target
- X = Fire weapon
- S = Select weapon
- L1 + R1 = Powerslide
- L2 = Turret left
- R2 = Turret right

Broken Sword

- Publisher: SCE
- Style: Adventure
- Price: £44.99

A complete change of pace for our final demo, the graphic adventure *Broken Sword*. You play yank George Stobbard, a visitor to Paris who gets caught up in a terrorist bombing and is determined to track down the clown-faced villain responsible. The game revolves around using your on-screen pointer to click on people and objects and direct you from screen to screen. In the full version, important clues turn into icons that can then be clicked on to interrogate different characters. In this short taster the demo finishes as soon as you talk to the pretty photographer, so don't do this until you've looked everywhere else. Further details on page 68.



- R1 = Speed-up cursor
- S = Action button, can be used to pick-up, examine objects or talk to people.

Essential

The Legend

18 years on air



'em



18 years

18 years



BOOM!

It began in 1979.

Rows of alien craft swarmed downwards
intent on visiting destruction
on an unsuspecting world.

Only you could stop the

Space Invaders...

18-years on and the shoot 'em up refuses to die.
Essential charts its transformation
From square-bashing turkey-shoot
to 3D spectacular and explains why
you still
can't beat a good blast.

Essential Selection

Feel that tension knotting up the back of your neck? A tad frustrated by life's way of foiling your cunning plans at every turn? Maybe it's just that you're bored and need a break from the monotony that is modern existence. If you're in this state of mind the last thing you need is a game that makes you think. Try a racing game and you'll be grinding your teeth (and your bodywork) turning savagely into each corner. Dabble in an adventure and you'll soon get fed-up with wandering around, looking for keys and trying to solve puzzles. What you need is mindless entertainment. Something that simultaneously releases all your

enjoy something that requires so little taxing of your grey matter. As if games should have some higher, educational purpose. Cobblers. A good shoot 'em up, like a fine example of any genre has enough variety, enough surprises and enough hidden depths to keep you thoroughly entertained.

Mip-mip, mip-mip, mip-mip, pachoo-pachoo! This is the sound of the game that started it all, *Space Invaders*. Arcade kings Taito crammed all our nebulous fears about the computer age into five rows of blocky alien ships. By moving down the screen in formation, gradually gaining speed and firing off the odd missile this otherworldly armada hoped to

“Boring. Predictable. Simplistic. Many people would falsely attribute these adjectives to the modern shoot 'em up. It's as if games should have some higher purpose...Cobblers.”

pent-up aggression and leaves you on a pumped-up adrenaline high. That's when only a quick blast on a shoot 'em up will do.

Boring. Predictable. Simplistic. Many people would falsely attribute these adjectives to the modern shoot 'em up. It's almost a class thing, as if it's considered naff or coarse to

conquer our world. And conquer it they did, exerting such control over our imagination that after nigh-on two decades if you want to understand what really makes videogames tick you still have to understand *Space Invaders*. Let's get one thing straight. However innovative and challenging it may have been at the time, shoot 'em ups have come a long way since *Space Invaders*. In terms of graphics, sound and presentation they're light years ahead of Taito's mip-mipping hordes. But *Invaders* set the pattern that a zillion scheming, shooting, exploding games would follow.

Impossible odds. That's the basis of any shoot 'em up. There must be an endless supply of

Have a blast 'cos...

"It's mindless fun"

- If the very reason you want to play a game is to escape mind-numbing worries about love, death and taxes the last thing you want is to replace them with a whole new set of worries (Where did I leave that key? How do I get out of here? Aaaaargh!). No, much better to rest your grey matter while having a right old time running around and blowing everything up.

enemies and only one of you to fight them off. *Space Invaders* showed how games could plug straight into your survival instincts by throwing ever faster, ever meaner waves of aliens down the screen towards you. This is the shoot 'em up in its native condition, a vertical affair in which you can only move left, right and fire. Fail to do these in the right order or get caught by a wave of aliens and you will die. For a long while people were content with just tweaking this basic format, producing a whole horde of *Space Invader* clones, the most memorable being *Galaxian* and *Galaga* (seen on the loading screens of the *Ridge Racer* games). Yet, other blasters showed that the shoot 'em up could expand beyond its 2D horizons.

Tempest was an innovative 3D shoot 'em up that rotated the action 90° into the screen. Instead of marching downwards the enemy sloped towards you along a series of 'lanes' drawn in outline. A decade on and the gameplay of this arcade classic still shines through in the PlayStation version, *Tempest X3*, even if the graphics are a tad primitive. However, it was two contemporaries of arcade *Tempest* that were to have an even more profound effect on the future of the shoot 'em up, *Battlezone* and



➔ **Dr Kimberley Stride, the babe who stars in Blam!**

Have a blast 'cos...

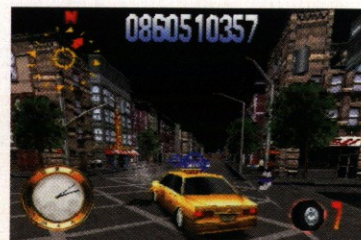
"It relieves stress"

- It's a well documented fact that blasting things provides a release for all that pent up aggro caused by our stress-packed modern lives. Instead of grinding your teeth, having a massive bust-up with your girlfriend and kicking the cat, try blasting evil alien robotoids to bits, strafing unsuspecting enemy tanks or taking out a nest of terrorists with a single rocket. Ahhh, that's much better.

ESSENTIAL SELECTION 1

DIE HARD TRILOGY

The most varied, the most innovative and the most entertaining blast for your PlayStation. *Die Hard* really is three games in one, a true 3D blaster, a Virtua Cop-style arcade shoot 'em up and a car combat game. Visually, all three sections of the game are stunning with realistic polygon people, atmospheric locations and lots of massive explosions to enjoy. Wander through Nakatomi Plaza blowing up parked cars, saving hostages and gunning down evil terrorists. Take a trip to Dulles airport and chase villains through buildings and out onto the snowbound airstrips. Drive through the mean streets of Manhattan bashing bomb cars until they explode and running down pedestrians. Magic.



You get to drive a robot like this in Krazy Ivan.



- In the classic arcade tank game *Battlezone* you never could reach the mountains you were driving towards as they were just a parallax background!
- For more info on great blasts from the past turn to *Definitely Retro* on Page 86...

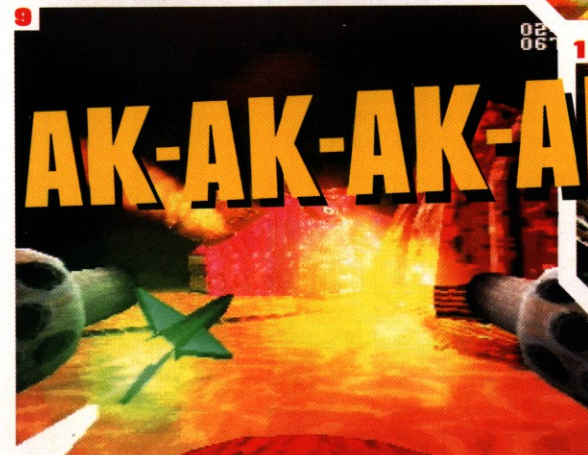
BOOM!



E F F E C T S

Special effects are an essential part of any good shoot 'em up. Lasers, rocket launchers, bombs, machine guns and flame-throwers must all produce an impressive visual effect when you pull the trigger. Even more importantly the environment must react appropriately. Ceilings should collapse, ammo dumps explode, glass shatter and flesh and bone disintegrate. Visual effects are only half the story though, without the right sound behind each blast any game will fail to satisfy your lust for destruction. Luckily for us the PlayStation is blessed with 24 channels of top-quality sound and a special chip (the Graphics Processing Unit) to help produce all those amazing semi-transparent balls of flame.

[1] The creators of *Die Hard Trilogy* ensure that whether you defuse the bombs or not everything goes with a THWOOOM! [2] Plenty of satisfying property damage to be done in *Tunnel B1*. [3] You ARE a one-man army in *Lone Soldier*, firing-off bazookas, throwing grenades and generally acting like Rambo. [4] Death of a snowcat in *Agile Warrior*. [5] Rambo beats up a tank. [6] *Die Hard* explodes again. [7] *Blam!* gives you an arsenal to play with. [8] *Tunnel B1* awash with flame. [9] *Blam!*'s amazing transparent effects. [10] Close up *Tunnel* blasting. [11] *DHT*: Just like ID4. [12] *Soviet Strike*'s solid explosions.



F A C T



■ 'Solvalou', a make of car in both *Ridge Racer* and *Ridge Racer Revolution*, comes from the name of the ship in the Namco arcade shooter *Xevious*.
■ For more info on great blasts from the past turn to *Definitely Retro* on Page 86...

Essential Selection

→ **Robotron.** *Battlezone* was a 3D tank game that allowed you to move around a landscape dotted with line-drawn geometric enemies and hazards and, naturally, blow them up. It was this idea of your gun platform moving towards and away from the enemy as well as dodging from side to side that set it apart from what had gone before. *Battlezone's* PlayStation descendants include such blasting luminaries as *Shellshock*, *Blam! Machinehead* and *Tunnel B1* although the concept of 'free movement' has been incorporated into almost every modern shoot 'em up since. *Robotron* was another game that allowed you to move freely as you

other words, deeply, deeply dull. *Space Invaders* had the stroke of genius to include an enemy so fiendish, so inhuman and so downright ugly that it was a pleasure to blast their blocky alien hides from the stratosphere. But it's not enough just looking unpleasant, enemies must behave badly as well. They have to be sneaky, under-hand and vicious but stupid enough for you to wade through wave after wave of them. This last point, the relative strength of you versus the enemy is vitally important. Make the opposition too weak, as in *Lone Soldier*, and a good blast will be over before you know it. Tipping the balance the other way can be just as

66 ...without great enemies any shoot 'em up is a twenty-four carat dud. It's *Die Hard* without Alan Rickman, *Dr Who* minus the Daleks. In other words deeply, deeply dull. 99

fired, this time in a more traditional 2D setting. It was the use of a human character to represent you in the game that made *Robotron* instantly appealing, coupled with the addition of innocent bystanders for you to save. While pure *Robotron*, in the form of *Robotron X*, hasn't stood the test of time as well as *Tempest*, the games that it has influenced are legion. *Loaded*, *Lone Soldier* and *Die Hard Trilogy* all build on the concept of a human-centric blaster with the last two games increasing the effect by adding a third dimension.

Yet no matter how freely you can move about and fire or how loveable your character or craft becomes without great enemies any shoot 'em up is a twenty-four carat dud. It's *Die Hard* without Alan Rickman, *Star Trek: TNG* without the Borg, *Dr Who* minus the Daleks. In



Doom was so popular it founded its own genre.

dangerous as *Agile Warrior* proves, frustrating even hardened shoot 'em up addicts with its battalions of super-tough enemy vehicles.

Although loathsome aliens are a good starting point for the ultimate shoot 'em up villain, the secret weapon in any game designer's arsenal has to be terrestrial wildlife. Spiders, snakes, crabs, octopi and lions have all been transformed into monstrous adversaries, usually in a robotised form like the mechanical arachnids in *Blam! Machinehead* and the killer robot crustaceans in *Krazy Ivan* and *Viewpoint*. Far from being the kind of primeval throw-back that many people expect, PlayStation shoot 'em ups have often been at the cutting edge of game design. The kind of impressive enemies found in games like *Resident Evil* and *Tomb Raider* owe their style and

Have a blast 'cos...

"It's quick"

- Although 3D adventures and strategy games may offer a great long term challenge they often demand hours of intense play that you may not be willing or able to give. Shoot 'em ups, like racing games, are much more rewarding in the short term, delivering an adrenaline rush the moment you pick up the pad and press Start. This makes them ideal for a five minute blast break.

realism to a whole species of monstrosities lovingly crafted to be blasted to atoms in the early 3D shoot shoot 'em ups. The truth is we simply wouldn't have the glorious variety of nasty things to kill in our 3D adventures if it wasn't for the appetite of shoot 'em up fans for a robot that lurched that much more menacingly, an alien abomination that died that much more entertainingly.

Yet great enemies aren't the only things that we have to thank the shoot 'em up for. It's easy to take the marvellous array of different weapons, explosions and special effects that modern games have at their disposal for granted but these too were pioneered by the spawn of *Space Invaders*. Early on in the life of any games machine a lot of effort goes into products that demonstrate what the new machine can do. Shoot 'em ups are ideal for showcasing new effects as much of their appeal derives from impressive graphics and sound. Early blasters like *Warhawk*, *Krazy Ivan* and *Loaded* all performed this function while also trying to offer a good blast for your money with varying degrees of success. When you torch a building in *Warhammer* you are, in fact, drawing on years of shoot 'em up expertise first developed to make tiny invader sprites disintegrate.

If the PlayStation blaster had →

SPIN-OFF GENRE

One 3D blaster was so successful that it opened up its own genre and that blaster was *Doom* [1]. Enter the halls of Hell and blast horrible demons that lie therein. The atmosphere is simply incredible with top-notch lighting and sound effects cranking up the tension. A PlayStation classic, you really should own *Doom* as well as a dedicated shoot 'em up. Other games in the *Doom* genre include *Alien Trilogy* [2], *Tenka*, *Disruptor* and the sequel, *Final Doom*.



ESSENTIAL SELECTION 2

TUNNEL B1



Combining the speed of a racing game with some of the best special effects yet seen, *Tunnel B1* sends you rocketing along subterranean passageways blasting everything in your path. Like old classics *Thrust* and *Asteroids* part of the fun here comes from actually controlling your craft as it waddles about. Of course the main action is attacking things; choppers, tanks, gun emplacements and all kinds of roving defences. It's tough enough to make you develop your own hit and run tactics and will punish you for just going in cannons blazing.



- *Die Hard Trilogy* was originally going to be three separate full-price games until they realised that they could fit the whole blockbusting blast onto just one disc.
- For more info on great blasts from the past turn to *Definitely Retro* on Page 86...

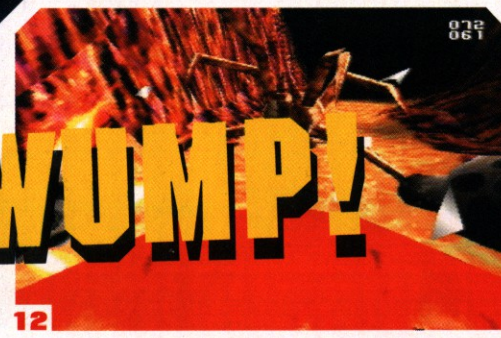
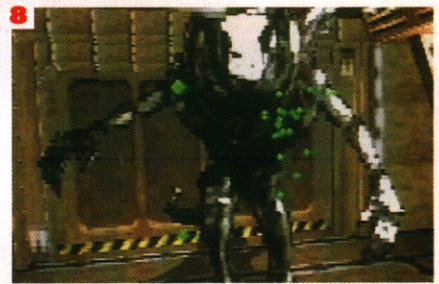
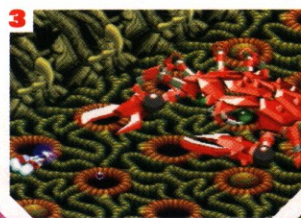
BOOM!

BOOM!

E N E M I E S

■ Shoot 'em up enemies have come a long way since the flat blocky space invaders. The PlayStation inaugurated a golden age of designer nasties that look and sound more menacing than ever before. Whereas old-style enemies were flat, the new breed are built out of polygons, 3D blocks that allow enemies to assume more complex shapes. Modern villains can now imitate naturally scary creatures (insects, reptiles, large primates) with some very unnatural bits (fireballs, extra arms, laser eyes). Apart from the usual tanks, aeroplanes and spaceships, villains can now come in the form of realistic humanoids proving that the scariest foe of all is, as we always suspected, another bloke with a gun.

[1] In *Die Hard Trilogy* there are heavily-armed terrorists lurking around every corner. With these targets they're easy to spot. **[2]** Enemy troops try to pin you down in *Lone Soldier*. **[3]** *Viewpoint's* angriest crustacean. **[4]** A swarm of xenomorphs in *Alien Trilogy*. **[5]** Carapace is a beetle-inspired droid from *Krazy Ivan*. **[6]** Prowl, *Krazy Ivan's* robotic panther. **[7]** Exclusive! Face-Hugging *Alien Trilogy* Horror Gnaws Marine. **[8]** Face-hugger's mother. **[9]** Fire: *Krazy Ivan's* laser-firing scorpion. **[10]** Ugly creepy-crawlie *Viewpoint* caterpillar. **[11]** Hear the droids approach. **[12]** Arachnid from *Blam!* **[13]** DHT Ambush.



“HALT! AIEEEEEEEEE!!!”

THWUMP! THWUMP!

F A C T

■ The first home version of pioneering 3D blaster *Tempest* appeared on the Vectrex console that, like the arcade game, used line-drawn vector graphics.
 ■ For more info on great blasts from the past turn to *Definitely Retro* on Page 86...

Essential PlayStation

Essential Selection

→ not moved on from these showy but superficial beginnings it might indeed be a case of thanks, but no thanks. But once again the shoot 'em up demonstrates its endless talent to endure. During a difficult transition period it masqueraded as a flight simulation in *Agile Warrior* and *Thunderhawk 2*, swallowed a good dose of puzzling in *Assault Rigs* and took to 3D duelling in *Descent*. At no time though did it forget that its mission was to destroy, to take on impossible odds and win through against the most viciously stupid villains. The 'realism' in *Agile Warrior*, *Thunderhawk* and *Shellshock* is merely camouflage for the you versus the world slugging match beneath. Shoot an enemy vehicle in *Agile* and a geometric power-up appears in mid-air to give you energy or more firepower.

once more proud to be recognised as such. Games like *Tunnel B1*, *Blam!*, *Machinehead* and *Die Hard Trilogy* don't feel the need to hide behind elements of other genres. Instead they are happy to offer what shoot 'em ups have always offered, excitement, thrills, action. There's no doubt that PlayStation blasters are a quantum leap forward from the 2D arcade games of yesteryear. Comparing *Space Invaders* to *Tunnel B1* is like comparing the Kitty Hawk to Concorde, they both do the same job but one is infinitely more sophisticated and more complex than the other. The new shoot 'em up is a glamorous, cinematic affair that replaces repetitive waves of attackers with a 3D environment in which you are hunter rather than hunted, setting out to destroy every last outpost of enemy resistance. It



It's the addictive quality of blasters like *Die Hard Trilogy* that makes you want to have another go at each level.

66 The new shoot 'em up is a glamorous, cinematic affair that replaces repetitive waves of attackers with a 3D environment in which you are hunter rather than hunted. 99

Thunderhawk is as much a flight sim as *Tekken* is an exhibition of Queensbury Rules fisticuffs, hence the fact that you can't get more than 50ft off the ground, are able to take tank rounds on the chin and sink her-uge warships with your chopper. *Shellshock* too rolls over familiar territory. It's basically just *Battlezone* with knobs on, you against a ridiculous number of heavily armed vehicles that you can destroy before they even make it over the horizon.

Having survived the vagaries of game fashion shoot 'em ups are

draws its inspiration from Eighties action movies; *Commando*, *Lethal Weapon*, *Die Hard*, *The Enforcer*, with their indestructible heroes and amazingly destructive weapons. There's no room for the apocalyptic, under siege feel of *Galaxian* or *Tempest* here, it's the aliens who'd better watch their backs.

So shoot 'em ups are exciting, surprising and often very sophisticated, the fact remains though that, like the movies they aim to emulate, they are inevitably shallow. Strategy games are more

intellectually stimulating. Adventures and platformers offer larger worlds to explore. Racing games and beat 'em ups deliver more secrets and bonus levels to discover. But there's one magic ingredient that shoot 'em ups have in spades that's often sadly lacking in games from other genres. A good shoot 'em up is supremely addictive. Nobody played *Space Invaders* because it looked pretty, or because it emitted a foul torrent of bleeps when you did something good. They played it because they became addicted to the adrenaline rush it gave them when they vanquished another wave of the mip-mipping foe. And when they got killed they just had to put more money in to have another go. It's this quality above all that makes it essential that you reserve a place in your collection for a good shoot 'em up.



ESSENTIAL SELECTION 3

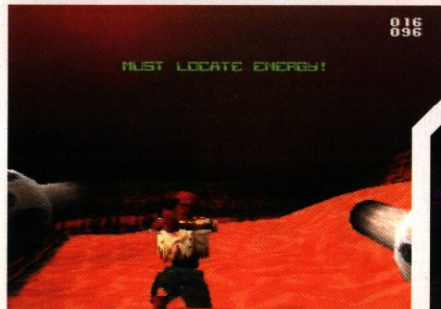
BLAM! MACHINEHEAD

Essential Quiz

So you think you know shoot 'em ups?

- 1 Which Japanese company produced the *Space Invaders* arcade machine?
- 2 What have *Battlezone*, *Shellshock* and *Assault Rigs* got in common?
- 3 Which airport is featured in *Die Hard Trilogy*?
- 4 What specialised chip inside your PlayStation helps create impressive visual effects?
- 5 Where can you play classics *Galaxian* and *Galaga* for free?

Answers Page 15



A thinking man's shoot 'em up that requires some cerebral activity to flip switches, find exits and so on. Mostly though it's just a cracking blast as you take on hordes of mechanical spiders, howitzer volcanoes and strange blokes in radiation suits. Occasional on-screen messiness is made up for in some excellent scenery with tall raised driveways to hover over, gaping chasms and even a robotic train.



- *Thunderhawk 2* and *Shellshock* share the same graphics engine. One is an airborne shoot 'em up while the other is a tank-busting game.
- For more info on great blasts from the past turn to *Definitely Retro* on Page 86...

Essential Quiz

Answers

- Racer Revolution.
Ridge Racer and Ridge
On the Loading screens of
Graphics Processing Unit
Dulles
Tanks
Taito

ESSENTIAL SELECTION 4

THUNDERHAWK 2



While its graphics are beginning to show their age the gameplay beneath is solid as a rock. *Thunderhawk 2* offers two kinds of play; a quick mindless blast or a series of more strategic search and destroy missions. Swoop down canyons firing off missiles in all directions or run along at ground level taking out tanks head on. The depth of challenge is here if you want to play for more than five minutes but however you play this delivers explosive action.



ESSENTIAL SELECTION 5

LONE SOLDIER

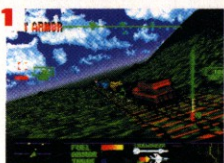


If we could do our sums correctly this game would not make it into our top five. Yet even though it's half as long as it should be, even though it's too easy somehow it adds up to more than the sum of its parts. It's just so darn stupid, an Arnie wannabe marine running about taking out whole battalions, tanks and bunkers as if he'd read the script of Rambo and decided that it was too realistic. If *Lone Soldier* was a comic it would cost 10p and nestle neatly inbetween Battle! Johnny Grenade and Tank Heroes during the early Eighties. Idiomatic fun.



ALTERNATIVELY

- **[1] Agile Warrior**
Underrated airborne blaster with a hint of strategy. The enemies are stupidly tough and require careful stalking. One for veterans only.
- **[2] Black Dawn**
A very pretty helicopter blaster that perhaps doesn't offer quite the depth of *Thunderhawk*. Still a worthwhile alternative.
- **[3] Novastorm**
Poor, formulaic shoot 'em up only saved by some nice lighting effects. Not up to the modern PlayStation standard.
- **[4] Raiden**
Throw-back to the 2D vertical shooters still found in launderettes and motorway service stations. For nostalgia buffs only.



[1] Destroying armoured vehicles in *Agile Warrior* gets you much needed 'armor' power-ups. **[2]** Better polygon graphics mean that *Black Dawn* is the prettiest airborne shoot 'em up. **[3]** *Novastorm* is a disappointing 2D blaster despite these impressive explosions. **[4]** Hang on, don't forget to put more 20ps in the tumble drier! *Raiden's* vertical scrolling backgrounds will take you back to the mid Eighties.



- **[5] Shellshock**
Disappointing tank combat game that misses out the kind of head-on shell swapping you really want.
- **[6] Soviet Strike**
Chopper shoot 'em up in a more arcade style. Derived from the old 16-bit *Strike* games, it's an acquired taste.
- **[7] Ultimate Parodius**
Utterly mad 2D affair with tons of cartoon enemies and ridiculous weapons and explosions. The best nostalgia trip.
- **[8] Viewpoint**
That old 3D shooter *Zaxxon* brought back to life. The trouble is this is so frustrating, it'll wind you up not down.



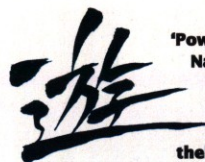
[5] Nice idea. Shame about the game. *Shellshock* fails to capitalise on the possibilities of tank-on-tank combat. **[6]** Although it looks more impressive when it's moving, *Soviet Strike* can't match the 3D chopper games. **[7]** For the ultimate nostalgia trip the mad world of *Parodius* with its gigantic sprites is hard to beat. **[8]** Much too hard and frustrating to play, *Viewpoint* evokes the spirit of the classic *Zaxxon*.



- Destroy all 40 alien ships on the *Galaga* loading screen of *Ridge Racer Revolution* and you gain access to eight extra cars in the game.
- For more info on great blasts from the past turn to *Definitely Retro* on Page 86...

the namco story

No-one can deny that Namco's role in supplying killer coin-op conversions has been vital to the PlayStation's success. Essential profiles the company behind the Tekken and Ridge Racer series and asks, what's new for '97?



'Powered by Namco' read the banners as Sony unveiled their new machine to an eager UK press. If you were one of the tens of thousands who turned up at games shops on the 29th of September 1995, excitedly handing over £299 for the all-new Sony PlayStation, then that phrase may mean something to you.

“To propel the PlayStation into Walkman and VHS territory Sony were going to need expert help.”

If, however, you got yourself a PS more recently the full force of those words may not be instantly apparent.

You see, the PlayStation is, was and always will be 'Powered by Namco'.

Even in its early days there was never any real doubt that the PlayStation would be a success. With the technological skill, will to succeed and sheer volume of cash Sony were prepared to put behind it, their 'biggest consumer hardware launch since the Walkman' was bound to find a place in at least a few million homes. But Sony had no experience of the games industry. Unlike Nintendo and Sega they had no arcade heritage, no knowledge of 8-bit or 16-bit hardware. To propel the PlayStation into Walkman and VHS territory they were going to need some expert help.

That help was to come from Namco, by the mid-Eighties one of the world's premier

arcade game manufacturers. This was the company that invented Pac-Man, the famous smiling cake-with-a-slice-removed yellow blob that munched dots in a maze while avoiding the attentions of four techni-coloured ghosts. This was also the company that, more recently, had changed the look and feel of driving games with the introduction of the ultra-real Ridge Racer. Sony instantly scotched any doubts about the software for their new launch by announcing that they had Namco on-board and that arcade-perfect conversions of the firm's huge arcade hits would be available only on their machine. The PlayStation, they claimed, would be 'Powered by Namco'. The result? The world promptly went PlayStation mad.

At the time Chris Deering,



Masaya Nakamura founded Namco in 1955. Thanks.

the president of Sony Computer Entertainment Europe, said: "Namco has one of the most extensive libraries of high-end entertainment arcade titles in the world. We are very excited to have the must-buy, mega-hit games for launch and beyond in Europe from such a high-profile entertainment company. With

1997: Namco's year?

Namco's contribution to PlayStation gaming is far from over. Just one look at their 1997 line-up should be enough to convince anyone that 1997 could be another classic year for Mr Nakamura's baby:

Rage Racer

Not an arcade conversion but an all-new third episode to the Ridge Racer series.



Rage Racer has a darker, more realistic look, making Ridge and Revolution seem almost cartoon-like by comparison. Needless to say there's a new track too with many, wildly different variations. There's plenty of stunning scenery, amazing hills and drops and it all whizzes by at new heights of breakneck-speed. Perform well in races to win money which can then be used to upgrade your car, customizing it with a new engine or maybe some natty spoilers or, alternatively, buy a newer, tastier motor outright. Another racing classic.

Soul Edge

Why produce another fighter if you've got Tekken 2? Well, this medieval themed battler



has the various combatants armed to the teeth with swords, spears and the like. It also looks rather different too, with even larger, even more detailed figures who use



company of America. Bushnell and his buddies made a fortune from it and other hilariously inadequate videogames like *Breakout* (knock the bricks from the wall) and *Space War* (fly a triangular spaceship around in an attempt to shoot another triangular blob spaceship). Keen to keep the dosh flooding in, Atari expanded into Japan, founding Atari Corp of Japan, in charge of flogging their hit American arcade games to an apparently ripe-for-the-picking Japanese market. But things rapidly began to go wrong. The costly Japanese venture simply did not reap the expected rewards and after effectively single-handedly inventing the videogame Atari now found themselves in serious financial difficulties. Selling the recently established Japanese arm of the business was the only option.

Companies were invited to bid for Atari of Japan and Nakamura's bid of \$500,000 was more than enough to secure ownership, beating Sega in the process who were also keen to get into the videogames market at that time. Nakamura's skill and business acumen soon saw his new videogames subsidiary turning in a profit, and ever keen to expand and remain ahead of the competition he encouraged the company to begin creating their own games. Their first was *Shoot Away*, introduced in 1977. It was a

simple shooting game which involved the blasting of blobs of light projected onto a static woodland/blue sky backdrop with two bulky over-sized rifle light-guns – shoot more blobs than your opponent and you win. It proved very popular both in Japan and abroad and you might still find it, lurking in the cobwebbed corners of decaying seaside arcades. Next up was 1978's stupidly named *Gee Bee*, a shoot 'em-up in a similar vein to Atari's old *Space War*. It was also one of the first games to inhabit the table-top, pint and ashtray friendly, coffee table-sized consoles that over-night appeared in every pub in the Western hemisphere.

Namco's biggest success came in 1979 with *Galaxian*. This unashamed rip-off of the previous year's world wide smash hit *Space Invaders*, produced by arcade rivals Taito, really put Namco on the map. It was *Space Invaders* but, get this, THEY FLEW DOWN THE SCREEN TOWARDS YOU! Pathetic though it sounds now it was an absolute revelation at the time.

“It was *Space Invaders* but THEY FLEW DOWN THE SCREEN TOWARDS YOU! It was a revelation...”

Namco made a packet from it and their videogames subsidiary became more than just a part of Namco – it was Namco. The best was yet to come, however. In 1980 Namco created *Pac-Man*. Invented by an unassuming Namco technician, Toru Iwatani, it turned into Namco's biggest game yet, spawning countless spin-offs, merchandise deals and even a dodgy cartoon series. The money earned from this success was invested in new



While currently residing in the arcades, Namco's *Time Crisis* will be turning up on PlayStation in the Autumn.



[11] Tekken 3 is Namco's best beat 'em up yet. [12] Things have changed a lot since Pac Man's day. [13] Soul Blade hits the PlayStation this May. make a tidy sum from a range of kiddie-rides, their popularity being greatly enhanced in 1966 with the acquisition of the rights to use various famous Disney characters. However, it wasn't until 1974 that Nakamura took their first fateful steps into the world of videogames.

Remember *Pong*? That laughably simplistic tennis simulation that went on to manifest itself as the early Eighties entertainment fad, the TV Game? This was the creation of Nolan Bushnell and his Atari



The *Ridge Racer* saga is set to continue with the release of *Rage Racer* in June.

Namco's games line-up, PlayStation will win the next generation games machine battle hands down in the eyes of gamers. The industry also recognises the significance of Namco's backing of Sony and we are fully committed to a long and successful partnership with Namco." But could they do it? Could Namco produce an arcade perfect conversion of the likes of *Ridge Racer* on the Sony PlayStation? And what made them such a valuable ally?

Namco had been founded in 1955 by Masaya Nakamura. At first Nakamura Manufacturing Limited's sole source of earnings derived from two rocking horse rides installed on the roof of a department store in Yokohama. The fledgling Nakamura Manufacturing company soon expanded and continued to

a totally new style of fighting, meaning that there's a whole new set of radically different moves to learn. It's very different and very, VERY good.

Time Crisis

As *Tekken* was to *Virtua Fighter*, so *Time Crisis* is to *Virtua Cop*. This lightgun shooter has a unique feature up its sleeve though. A foot-pedal



allows you to duck behind scenery, popping up when the coast is clear to take out

the surprised bad guys lurking behind the scenery ahead. For the PlayStation version Namco have developed a new GunCon controller with a button beneath the barrel replacing that vital pedal. It's all looking rather marvellous.


Namco Museum Volume 3

Set for release soon is the third instalment in the *Namco Museum* series (there are to be five in total, we're told). Number three reunites you with *The Tower of Druaga*, *Pole Position 2*, *Dig Dug*, *Phozon*, *Cutie Q* and *Galaxian*. Hang about, did someone say *Galaxian*?

Ah, how the memories come flooding back...

Tekken 3

Coy Namco are currently 'looking into' (ahem) a PlayStation conversion of this just-unveiled 3D fighter. Could this latest *Tekken* episode stretch the PlayStation too far? Rumours abound of the game requiring a hardware add-on (which will come packaged with it) which will bolster the PlayStation's specification to the

necessary standard to allow the now customarily brilliant *Tekken* arcade conversion. Fingers crossed for a perfect conversion without a huge price... 





1 *Alpine Racer* set new standards in the arcades. **2** *Starblade* made it to PlayStation in a lacklustre conversion, showing up the simplicity of the original.



technology and expanding the company's R&D department. The thinking went if they could do it once then they could do it again, and indeed they did.

Hits like *Rally X*, *Galaga*, *Dig Dug*, *Pole Position*, *Xevious* and *Mappy* followed, making Namco the number one arcade game manufacturer. By this time the American Atari company had found its feet again and were producing the famous Atari VCS. With its mock-wooden end-cheeks and distinctive single-buttoned joysticks it introduced arcade games to the home and sold by the shedful. This is where Nintendo enter our story. The had created their NES console in an attempt to steal Atari's thunder. It was a far more advanced machine and soon dominated the Japanese games market. But to be a worldwide hit they, like Sony, knew they would need Namco's help.

The fruits of this new partnership were NES versions of Namco's hits. Namco were the first third party company that Nintendo had allowed to produce games for the NES. The deal was highly lucrative for both companies so when the initial five-year contract expired renewal on the same terms seemed a mere formality to Mr Nakamura. However, during these years Nintendo had a whole catalogue of third party developers, all of whom were held under a far tighter monetary grip than Namco. Times had changed. Five years earlier Nintendo had needed Namco's games, now with 95 per cent of the Japanese console market and an incredible third of all American households owning a NES, it was Nintendo's boss Hiroshi Yamauchi who could call the shots. Namco would have to sign the deal or leave the market – which is precisely what an outraged Mr Nakamura did. In fact, such was his displeasure, he accused Nintendo of 'unfair and irresponsible trading' in a Japanese newspaper and filed a lawsuit against the company.

Unfortunately, what Mr Nakamura hadn't taken into

Discography

Yes! Now Namco's arcade magic can be yours to play at home via their excellent range of PlayStation conversions:

Ridge Racer

The first PlayStation game and the game Sony claimed they invented the PlayStation to play. A perfect home conversion of the then arcade number one hit was essential to their strategy, and that's exactly what they got. Although the resolution has been lowered and there are far less colours on-screen at once, this is still viewed as being arcade perfect. And there's a brand new out of car view available too.

Cybersled

This futuristic tank combat game was remarkably popular in the arcades. The two-player console allowed a pair of contestants to slug it out against each other, driving polygonal tanks around a Tron-like cyber city. In the PlayStation version the two-player link-up is still possible but it's amazing how dull the game is in single player mode.

Air Combat

It's a fair cop. This okayish 3D flying game looks a little dated next to current PlayStation fare but it is nevertheless a solid enough game and a great conversion of a minor Namco arcade hit. Nice but shallow.

Starblade Alpha

Another of those 'good in the arcades – terrible at home' games. Like *Cybersled* this is graphically an improvement over the original arcade game but the simplistic move-a-cross-hair-about-and-shoot spiky polygonal spacecraft becomes terribly tedious.

Galxian 3

This acclaimed multi-player arcade game is actually even worse on PlayStation than its *Starblade* predecessor. The backgrounds are fuzzy recordings of the CGI rendered movies used in the original arcade version. In the arcade they looked fine – here they look awful and the repetitive 'game on rails' gameplay is even more obvious.

Namco Museum

Voolo1 & 2

See *Definitely Retro* feature, page 86.

Ridge Racer Revolution

Not *Ridge Racer 2* but something different altogether. Borrowing the rear-view mirror from *RR2* and the multi-play feature (*RRR* is absolutely brilliant in link-up mode, which requires two TVs, two PlayStations, two copies of the game and a link-up cable) and using a brand new track (with many variations) this is the *Ridge* to go for. The original track is in there too but, rather disappointingly, only available in link-up races. And the PAL conversion is nigh-on perfect this time, thank Jehovah.



Tekken

Although still found in some less fashionable arcades this 3D fighter is currently far more popular in this PlayStation conversion. Although using a reduced number of polygons to depict its characters, cunning texture-mapping helps to keep everyone looking as detailed as the arcade original. And, it actually plays better too. The time taken for the conversion allowed the designers to sneak in slightly improved, more fluid combo execution and fine tune the timing too. Great stuff.

Tekken 2

At first glance this follow-up appears blockier than the original game but this is due to an increased polygon count and less reliance on that texture-mapping. Although not quite as good-looking as the superb arcade game it's got all the characters, all the moves and all the gameplay for your delectation. Truly a masterpiece of game design, this is the best fighter currently available on the PlayStation. Just one of the PlayStation's ever-swelling catalogue of must-buys.



Despite a superb PlayStation conversion it's still worth trying out *Ridge Racer* in a linked-up arcade cabinet.

account was that by this time 40 per cent of the company's profits were coming from sales of their NES games. In the end he was forced to bite the bullet and sign the new, far less profitable deal just to keep that vital cash flowing in. However, it is rumoured that Nakamura never forgave Yamauchi and so when Sony approached the company in 1994 seeking their help with launching the PlayStation (a move spurred on by the arrival of recent Namco

arcade hits like *Air Combat*, *Cybersled* and of course *Ridge Racer*) Namco were only too pleased to switch allegiance.

Namco's triumph was complete when, on the 3rd of December 1994, they unveiled a stunningly accurate version of *Ridge Racer* for the PlayStation's massive Japanese launch. The game had been produced in an astoundingly short six month time span and yet was, as near as damn it, arcade perfect. Even greater success was to follow in

1995 and 1996 with the sequel *Ridge Racer Revolution* and conversions of their other big arcade hits *Tekken* and *Tekken 2*. With Sony's help Namco developed the System 11 board used in the *Soul Edge* arcade machine and Sony's recent production of the new System 12 board for *Tekken 3* shows that the alliance between the two videogame giants is far from over. Something that bodes particularly well for 1997.



"COOL BOARDERS IS SUPERB".

Mean Machines PlayStation

COOL BOARDERSTM



"Cool Boarders is the top one-player sports game on the PlayStation"

PlayStation Plus 91%



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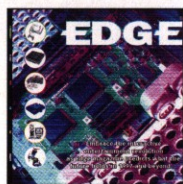
DO NOT
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OF PLAYSTATION

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Exclusive free supplement with issue 44 – embrace
the interactive entertainment revolution as Edge
predicts what the future holds for 1997 and beyond...



The future of interactive entertainment
EDGE

Issue 44 on sale April 3



The **Essential Tour** reaches yet another high point, **dissecting** the best racing and the best blasting games, **dipping into** the world of the arcade classic and **loitering** to savour the odd adventurous interlude. **Essential knowledge** is contained in the pages that follow...

Essential Playtest

Classic games reviewed and tipped including playtests of the demo disc titles.

Essential Selection

Advice on how to build-up your own collection of the best PlayStation games.



Every title released since launch given an Essential rating.

Essential Update

The best recent releases scrutinised in our mini-reviews section.

Playtest Scoring



Essential purchase
Highly recommended



Good but flawed
Average



Not recommended

VERDICT

Essential
PlayStation

■ GRAPHICS:

What it looks like /10

■ GAMEPLAY:

Quality of play /10

Finally, a short summary of the game's good and bad points with a score out of five stars.

■ SOUND:

How it sounds /10

■ PRESENTATION:

Overall polish /10

■ LIFESPAN:

How long you'll play it /10

■ ORIGINALITY:

Anything new? /10



Five Star Rating

Keeping control

Although *Formula 1* was originally designed to work with the Gamester steering wheel, somewhere along the way the two parted company. The unfortunate upshot is the wheel that works perfectly with *Ridge Racer Revolution* is not fully compatible with *F1*, so that you can't get 100% acceleration with the pedals and can't access replays and options through the wheel's buttons. The only specialist controller that works properly with *F1* is Namco's Negcon, a strange type of joystick made of two halves that twist around each other to produce an analogue steering effect (the more you twist, the sharper you turn). At present the standard controller is still the best option.



Formula 1

'Bee-utiful', as Murray Walker might say. You certainly can't ignore *Formula 1*'s good looks but has it really got what it takes under the bonnet?

Reality isn't what it used to be. Once upon a time, when consoles had the mock wood finish of your dad's TV, a few white pixels shifting left and right was enough to get you frothing at the mouth, eager to overtake. Then came a spate of arcade machines that shunted our expectations miles ahead: *Ridge Racer* with its super-smooth tracks and amazing night-time lighting effects; *Daytona* with its sliding circuits and bashable cars; and, perhaps most influential of all, *Virtua Racing* with its polygon bodywork and 3D scenery.

The arrival of the PlayStation

broke this coin-op monopoly. For the first time people could play arcade-quality racers like *Ridge Racer* and *Wipeout* on a home machine. But the PlayStation didn't stop there. It had one more trump card to play – a game that claimed to take racing games a giant step closer to reality, not just in the way they looked but in the way they played.

In Grand Prix mode *Formula 1* looks, sounds and feels like a different kind of racing game. So much attention has been lavished on its graphics that it might seem safe to assume that it's lacking in other departments. But while our pictures demonstrate its obvious good looks we can reveal *Formula 1*'s many hidden strengths.

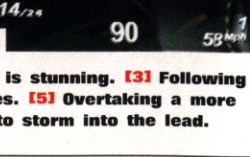
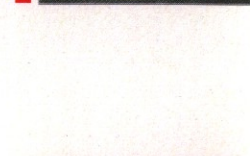
Traditionally, racing coin-ops favour two types of handling – the impossibly grippy, turn-on-a-sixpence feel of *Ridge Racer* and the slippery-slidey, wallowing feel of *Daytona*. The surprising thing is that, in a bid for even greater realism, *Formula 1* takes a middle route, allowing you both to turn sharply and slide around. It might sound like this means that you can drive sloppily, but it doesn't.

First you take the *Ridge Racer* approach, keeping the power on and



[1] Each car features its team's distinctive livery. [2] Ferraris are red and fast down the straight, as you'd expect.

turning late. It all looks perfectly do-able for a moment but then the corner rears up and you shoot forwards on to the grass, lose your position and end up crawling back on to the circuit. Next you try to do a *Wipeout* and start turning early, before the corner appears. This either sends you sliding off the track the other way, or it works momentarily (bringing you closer into the corner) but still doesn't give



[1] You get the choice of wet, dry or variable weather conditions. [2] Even close-up, the level of detail is stunning. [3] Following the racing line round corners is the key to success. [4] You can choose to race from a variety of angles. [5] Overtaking a more powerful car is tricky. [6] Sink too low and you can't see the corners. [7] A good start will allow you to storm into the lead.



PUBLISHER: Psygnosis
STYLE: Racing simulation
PRICE: £49.99



[1] Shaving the kerbs will save you vital seconds. **[2]** Brake later than those in front and you can swerve past. **[3]** In Grand Prix mode one wheel in the gravel will send you spinning out. **[4]** All 17 Formula 1 circuits are selectable. **[5]** Replay your best moves. **[6]** Saubers are realistically rubbish. **[7]** Even distant parts of the track are visible. **[8]** Taking the inside line.



you enough room to turn in. As a last resort, you'll apply the brakes as you turn, attempting a powerslide – but this too is likely to send you spinning out of contention. So what, exactly, are you supposed to do?

Okay, forget all these arcade manoeuvres for a moment, and pretend you're driving a real F1 car. Firstly, make sure you're following the racing line (the black tyre mark on the track) – this will point you towards the apex of the corner.

Then dab the brakes on the last part of the approaching straight. The trick is to decelerate just enough to make it around the tightest part of the curve in one smooth turn before slamming the power back on as the corner straightens out. You'll need to learn a smooth driving style, totally at odds with the jerky, twitchy manoeuvring of your average racer.

This is the true beauty of F1 – that it forces you to drive properly. Yes, when you're more experienced you can pull-off some outrageous manoeuvres, nipping through on the inside, riding the kerbs of a chicane and skirting gravel traps. But all these moves carry with them an

enormous element of risk. Put one tyre wrong, have a sudden rush of blood to the head at the wrong time, and you'll watch your hopes of a points finish evaporate as you spin off. *Formula 1* is firm but fair. It rewards bravery but mercilessly punishes reckless driving.

When you first load up the game the layers of Options screens may seem a mite confusing. In fact the route to begin a Grand Prix race is fairly sensible (if a little lengthy loading-wise). What the Difficulty Setting, Race Length, Damage, Tyre

Wear and Assist options allow you to do is tailor the challenge to suit your own level of skill precisely.

To begin with, you'll want to keep Damage and Tyre Wear off, making your vehicle all but indestructible. If you keep spinning off, you can always switch on the Brake or Steering Assist to give you a helping hand, although it's advisable to get used to the way an unassisted car steers as soon as possible. Leaving the difficulty level on the easiest setting will allow you to practise just staying →

Practice and Qualifying

The addition of Practice and Qualifying before every race may seem over the top, but in fact it's vital that you clock up fast times to secure a decent place on the grid. While on the easiest difficulty setting, you can scythe through the field; on Medium and Hard, you'll need all the help you can get to make it to the finish line first. Qualifying is also the right place to tinker with the set-up of your car, adding more downforce if the track is full of corners, or taking some off if it's got plenty of fast straights. You also choose whether to run wet tyres or slicks (important if the weather is variable). Your set-up from Qualifying will be carried through into the race itself.



Without wet tyres and plenty of downforce, it's all too easy to lose it in the wet and crash.

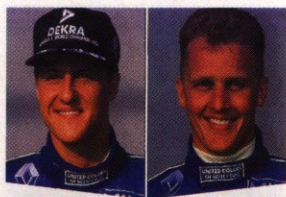


[1] Fail to brake early enough and the resultant collision can lose you hard-won places. **[2]** In Arcade mode you can afford to take chances. **[3]** It's less likely that you'll get punished for any mistake in an Arcade race. **[4]** Cutting it fine. **[5]** If you are not going significantly faster than the driver in front they won't hesitate to close the door, smashing your wing.

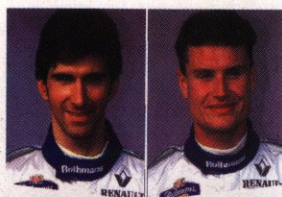
Essential Playtest

License to kill for

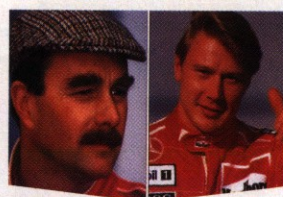
While FIFA may be the one everyone wants, Psynosis have cannily wrung every ounce of mileage out of the FOCA licence. Not only have they crammed in all 13 teams and 35 drivers from the '95/'96 season, they've also produced life-like versions of the 17 Formula 1 tracks. Even better, the programmers have used access to a wealth of technical information from constructors to make the cars handle as realistically as possible, so that they accelerate, corner, slide and crash just like the real thing.



Benetton Renault



Williams Renault



McLaren Mercedes



Ferrari



In Arcade mode the white number shows you how many seconds you have got to reach the next checkpoint.

On the track, while giving you some hope of moving up a place or two. Get smoother and slicker in your cornering and you'll barge through the pack and start challenging for points.

Now would be a good time to turn on Damage. Suddenly over-taking isn't so easy. Try being too gung-ho and you'll have your nose cone or back spoiler chopped off, and lose vital grip. You have to take a much more measured approach to the other drivers, braking to avoid collisions and picking the right time to nip out and power past. Whack the difficulty up to Medium and suddenly everything gets much tougher. Other drivers defend their position ferociously, shutting the door on you at every opportunity and capitalising on your smallest errors.

Trying to win the driver's championship on Hard is the ultimate challenge and demands almost super-human skill and



[1] Race as any one of the 35 drivers. **[2]** Use less downforce and you'll go faster. **[3]** Taking the inside line can be foolhardy.

consistency. You'll suddenly twig that the Practice and Qualifying rounds aren't just annoying interruptions placed between you and the race proper. You need to practise each circuit to discover where you can pass, where you can make up time and where you have to brake or slide out.

Qualifying lets you put this information to the test as you try to clock up progressively faster times while avoiding a smattering of other drivers. It's crucial, too, that you check the set-up of your car before

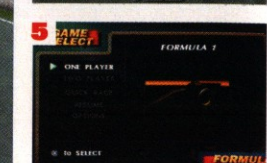


SCHUMACHER	3 LAPS	IRVINE	2.304
BLUNDELL	0.088	ALESI	3.315
BERGER	0.352	FRENTZEN	8.902
TAG HEUER Official Timing			

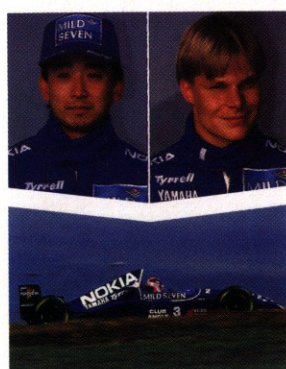
a race. Do you need to alter your downforce to get more or less grip? Should you start on wets or slicks if the weather is variable? If you don't succeed in getting a decent place on the grid, you're going to have no chance of winning the race with the difficulty on hard.

Pick Arcade mode and you'll

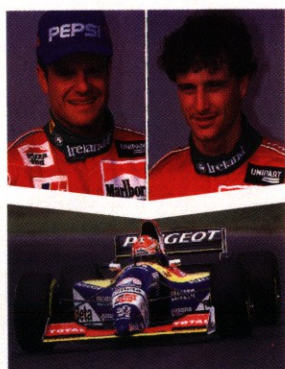
[1] The spray thrown up by the pack limits visibility. **[2]** If you're going to hit anything then a tyre wall is least likely to wreck your car. **[3]** If you're after a quick race then the Arcade mode will allow you to quickly work your way up the field into contention. **[4]** The feeling of speed is aided by the amazing trackside scenery. These trees seem to fly past. **[5]** If you're feeling lonesome on one-player, one tremendous option is a two-player link-up with a mate.



Formula 1



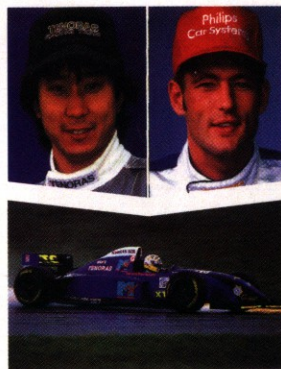
Tyrrell Yamaha



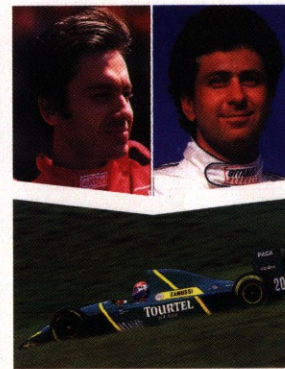
Jordan Peugeot



Corse Ford



Simtek Ford



Larrousse Ford

miss out on all of these subtleties. Here your F1 car behaves exactly like a car in any other racing game. You can turn stupidly late, you can bash into other drivers without a thought for your bodywork and you can barge through to the front the first time you play. It's not that this isn't fun to play, far from it, but what you haven't got is the depth and sophistication of play that makes *F1* a must-buy title.

If you really can't stomach the simulated elements of the game, or you only want a quick race, Arcade mode is fine. On the other

hand, if you want pure escapism and the kind of thrills that will keep you up into the early hours, scrapping all the way through a world championship, then Grand Prix mode is where it's at.

It's worth examining *Formula 1*'s inner workings first because this helps to prove what a truly stunning all-round product it is. Visually it has few equals on the PlayStation – *Tomb Raider*, *Resident Evil* and *Wipeout 2097* are the only games that match its superb quality of finish. The graphics aren't perfect; there is some slow-down when large



groups of cars are encountered and the odd stutter (more to do with sound being read off the CD than anything else). In the main, though, the track swings around you in a sublime fashion, distant scenery is drawn so quickly that you don't really notice, and the 17 tracks all have a distinctive look with recognisable landmarks to help you navigate your way about.

The cars are just as familiar, too, with gaudy multi-coloured Jordans, fire-engine red Ferraris and the trademark blue and white of Williams. Once again, though, this surface detail is accompanied by just as much attention under the bonnet with each constructor's car exhibiting marked differences in power, acceleration and handling. Ferraris are fast on the straights but have ➔

[1] A good strategy is to follow along in a driver's slipstream before nipping out to try and overtake. [2] Nice yachts. Skirting Monaco's marina.

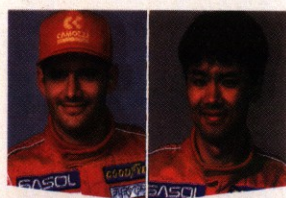
A perfect start

As in real Grand Prix racing, the main thing to worry about is making it round the first corner in one piece. Still, if the opportunity arises you can't pass up the chance to move up a place or two. Most of the pack will keep to the racing line so the trick is to ride up a kerb, or use one of the tarmac 'run-offs' to try and power past. Obviously this sort of manoeuvre is easier if you've got one of the more powerful cars (the Williams or Ferrari is best).

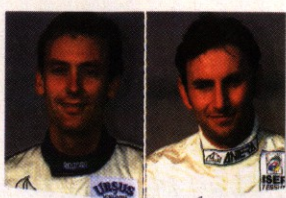


[1] Getting stuck behind a line of slower cars can be infuriating. [2] Your team mate is unlikely to show you any courtesy. [3] The display shows your relative position. [4] Grid placement is important. [5] From this view you hear your wheels rumbling.

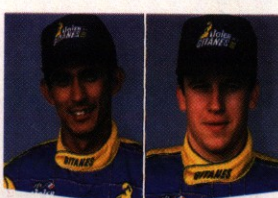
Essential Playtest



Arrows Hart



Team Lotus



Ligier Mugen Honda



Minardi Ford



Sauber Ford



problems with the corners, Benetton's like corners but don't have the same raw power, while the Saubers and Simtek Fords are nightmarish all-round.

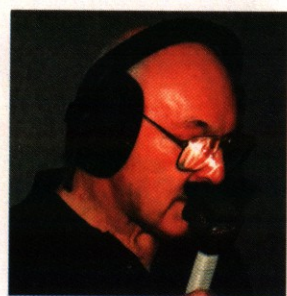
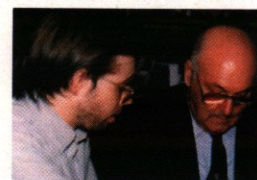
The sound is equally top-notch, featuring all the screeching and engine-revving you could want, with excellent commentary provided by Murray Walker. Just like in real life,

he never runs out of things to say. Inevitably there's some repetition but every so often a new line pops up that you haven't heard before, even after several days play!

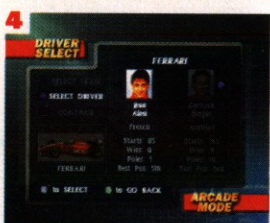
There is a downside to all this quality, however. By comparison, many other PlayStation titles tend to look woefully unrealistic and amateur-ish. Of course, realism isn't

'It IS Murray Walker!'

Of course you can't have F1 racing without the voice of Murray Walker, as even ITV found out. He provides his usual brand of excitable nonsense screaming, 'Oh no!' as you go off or, 'There was definitely contact there', after a collision. Cleverly, his comments take in what's going on in the rest of the race, running through the race order, letting you know who's ahead and who's turning off into the pits. Although he does repeat himself during the course of a race, every so often he'll come up with a new comment. You'll find that his 'AND, AND, AND... YEEESS!' is particularly enjoyable.



[1] The home straight at Interlagos. Getting in position for the sharp left-hander is all-important. **[2]** Although more difficult, powering around the outside is relatively safe. **[3]** After the Replay, save your championship position. **[4]** Pick the feisty French-Sicilian. **[5]** These rear-lights help you locate other drivers. **[6]** For an extra challenge try a less powerful car. **[7]** Blimpcam™.



Formula 1

[1] 'It's Alesi!' You can force other drivers into making a mistake. [2] A Ligier up close. [3] The Benetton handles well. [4] Sponsors take note, all the correct adverts are reproduced in F1.



everything – a lot of games manage to create their own entertaining and absorbing fantasy worlds. Still, the lure of something more concrete, something that not only looks but also feels like the real thing, is tremendously powerful.

Formula 1 has over-taken our old notions about how real games can be and it's up to everyone else to keep up.



Two-player racing

You can get a mate in on the action providing you've got a spare PlayStation, copy of the game, TV and link-up cable. It's up to you whether you race in a head-to-head duel or with up to 24 other PlayStation-controlled drivers on the track. The only pain here is that any game saves don't record your relative positions so, without leaving your machine on for days, it's tricky to race the whole world championship against your mate.



Tips

Various cheats

Enter these cheats on the Race Qualifying screen:

Key:



Extra Track

Hold Select and quickly press Right, O, O, T, T, O, Up, Right

Lava mode

Hold Select and quickly press S, O, Up, Right, Right, O, X

Gibberish mode

Hold Select and quickly press Left, O, Up, Down, Down, Right, O, S, S

Bike mode

Hold Select and quickly press Down, Up, O, T, Right, Up, S, T

Buggy mode

Hold Select and quickly press Right, Up, T, Left, Up, S, T



[1] Depending on the camber of the track, corners can be deceptive. [2] 'He's into the barriers!' [3] Wave to your chum. [4] Grandstand views. [5] A Honda-powered Ligier. [6] Winning in a Jordan is an achievement. [7] Win in a Tyrrell and it's time to up the difficulty.

Alternatively

Wipeout 2097

This futuristic speedster is sufficiently different to offer some real competition to F1. Although it loses out in the realism department, its inspired graphics, top weapons and all-round style make it a worthy fantasy alternative.

★★★★★



Essential PlayStation

VERDICT

■ GRAPHICS: Incredibly realistic 9 ■ GAMEPLAY: Simulated genius 9
■ SOUND: 'It's Murray!' Great 9 ■ PRESENTATION: Slick 8
■ LIFESPAN: 17 tracks 9 ■ ORIGINALITY: Mould-breaking 8

F1 is the best racing game you can get. Ultimate escapism for Formula 1 fans.



Five Star Rating

B is for BOOM!

There are four basic weapons at your disposal which constitute your main armament. Secondary weapons like mines and flares are better used more tactically, but these are the babies that'll get you out of a real tight spot:

Machine Gun

This basic, weak weapon requires no ammunition and is the default gun for your craft. It can be upgraded with a twin barrel or triple barrel for extra firepower.

Rocket

Standard rockets cause damage across a wide area on impact. Any craft (even the player's) will take damage if too close. Twin rockets and Seeking

rockets – which can be locked onto a target before firing – are also available in the game.

Missile

Similar to the rockets but smaller and far more manoeuvrable. Again there is a Seeking upgrade and Twin missile power-up to be had.

Argon laser

The laser is primarily used to deplete an opponent's shield rather than damage their craft. There is a Neon Laser upgrade available which causes twice as much damage and a twin laser which you'd imagine should do the same. But, strangely, doesn't.



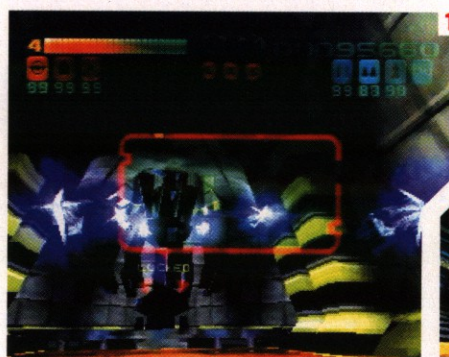
Neon and sulphur glow as you enter...



Tunnel B1

Careering out of control through a murky labyrinth of tunnels may not sound like fun, but you'd be surprised at just how liberating it can be...

Doom has a lot to answer for. Doom wannabes mostly. Okay, so *Tunnel B1* isn't a direct clone of the most ripped-off game in history but it's certainly a mutated, in-bred younger cousin. The *Doom*-style shooter is now a genre in itself. *Hexen* and *Quake*, from *Doom*'s creators Williams, have followed the formula with most success. *Alien Trilogy* was passable while newcomers like *Tenka* and *Barb Wire*, (the game of the Pammy Anderson film) struggle to get recognition as anything more than pale shadows of The Great Game. There are no doubt more *Doom*-ettes to follow and it cannot be denied that *Doom*, perhaps more than any



[1] Some of the lighting effects and flashes that take place during battle are just superb as they rip through the darkness. **[2]** Here the fireworks start as another assault is launched on some gun emplacements. **[3]** Sometimes the darkness and emptiness can create an incredibly tense atmosphere. You just know it won't stay quiet for long...



other game, has shaped the future of videogaming in the Nineties. *Tunnel B1* is, in essence, *Doom* played at speed. It may take place in a craft, rather than on foot, your adversaries may not be quite as forthcoming as in *Doom*, and there are other objectives than simply progressing to the next level

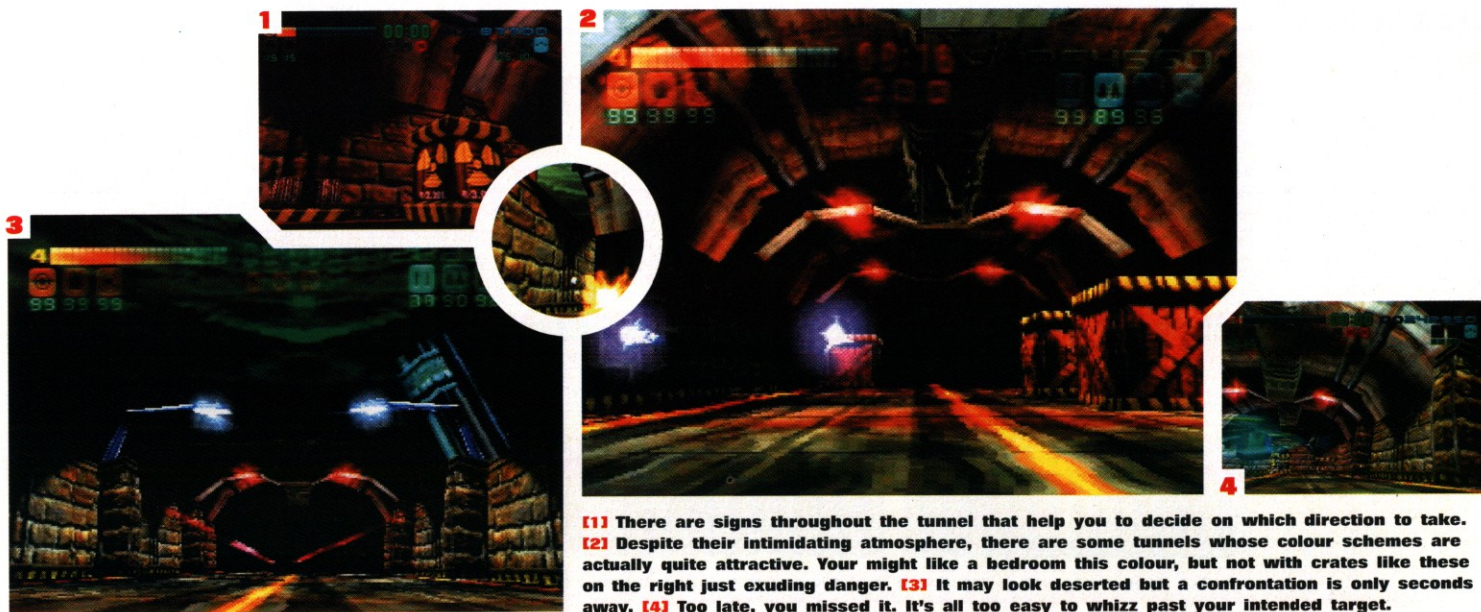
intact, but you still have to say that the *Doom* influence is all pervasive. Witness it in your setting; a dark and dank network of tunnels which create a claustrophobic, sinister atmosphere. Feel it in your controls as you move freely in any direction with ease. See how your arsenal expands at every step. And, most noticeably, feel the tension as you wait for your enemies to strike. But first a brief history lesson. The time: The



[1] You wouldn't walk down here on a dark night, now would you? **[2]** And you don't get explosions like that in *Doom* or *Alien Trilogy*, do you? **[3]** And have you ever seen a gun that big, even if it does look a little WWII? **[4]** That small glow could be worth investigating.



PUBLISHER: Ocean
STYLE: Shoot 'em up
PRICE: £44.99



[1] There are signs throughout the tunnel that help you to decide on which direction to take. [2] Despite their intimidating atmosphere, there are some tunnels whose colour schemes are actually quite attractive. You might like a bedroom this colour, but not with crates like these on the right just exuding danger. [3] It may look deserted but a confrontation is only seconds away. [4] Too late, you missed it. It's all too easy to whizz past your intended target.

Future, the place: Underground, the mood: Predictably apocalyptic, oppressive and downbeat. Indiscriminate, unnamed evil entities rule the world and are busily developing the ultimate weapon. You know the score, it's your duty to stop him/them/it.

That might be the game's *raison d'être*, but in simple terms, to

progress to the next level you have to complete certain mission objectives. The primary mission objective is compulsory but there are also secondary objectives which lead to bonuses. These additional mission goals are not compulsory, but as the game progresses they become more essential to your chances of completing a mission

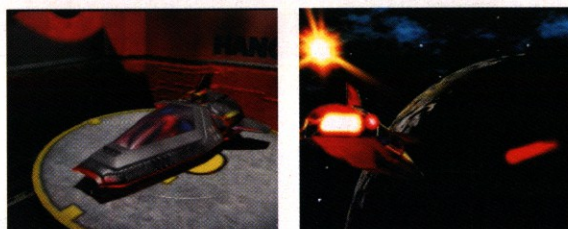
successfully. All mission objectives are detailed at the start of the level both in text-heavy info boxes and snazzy symbols (just in case you are easily confused). Presentation is impressive throughout.

But we've teased you enough, you want to know how it plays, don't you? Well, it's worth the wait. Worth its weight in gold in fact.

Initially the hover vehicle you control just feels far too fast and motion sickness hits you. Acceleration is not a big enough word to describe how quickly your vehicle speeds up. Braking quickly, doesn't quite sum up the immediacy with which you stop. It's like you've drunk too much caffeine and every movement seems twitchy and exaggerated. After playing for a long time, however, you learn to love this intuitive, instantaneous movement and revel in it. You can turn on and off the speed of movement like canned laughter in a bad sketch, and spin round like a

Cheesy scenes

The intro sequence is nothing to get over excited about, which is surprising considering the quality of the game's graphics in general. Explosions are seen on a far off moon, spaceships are shown and various planets spin in orbit. All very tense but lacking much in the way of plot development. This is probably a blessing in disguise, however, considering the cringe-worthy pretension that awaits you in the manual: 'Upon twisted, groaning girders, in the sluice of a cast-off generation, society has been built to the brink of its own destiny...' Nuff said, on with the action.



[1] More tunnels. [2] More neon. [3] These small boxes hide various power-ups which can be picked up. Simply shoot them up and then glide over the icons which are left. [4] The overhanging lights look incredibly real. [5] Beware of this. [6] And definitely avoid this.

Great tunnels

Tunnels have always provided thrills and spills in the world of entertainment, but long before they came to videogames it was the cinema in which you could find the best tunnel effects. Here then are our top five tunnels of all time.

1. *Tom, Dick and Harry*

The Great Escape is one of the best war movies of all time and other than Steve McQueen the tunnels were the real heroes. If only the tragic lves had got to sample the claustrophobic hope they provided...

2. *The one in Shawshank Redemption*

'Andy Du Pont crawled through a quarter of a mile of the foulest stench I can imagine'. etc etc. Tim Robbins crawls through shit and comes out the other end better for it.

3. *The one in Raising Arizona*

Comedy tunnel time as John Goodman pops his head up through the squelchy mud of a football pitch and escapes prison before inflicting his slobby lifestyle on a reformed Nicholas Cage with wife and (stolen) baby.

4. *The one in Raiders of the Lost Ark*

Who can ever forget Harrison Ford being chased by a boulder, having to avoid spikes and all manner of obstacles at the same time? Used for spoof purposes many a time since.

5. *The sewers in Gator*

One day Dad flushes a pet lizard down the bog, the next this toxically mutated monster is breaking out of the sewers to wreak havoc on New York. Unbelievable.



[1] One thing we've yet to mention is that these pictures just cannot convey the speed and fluidity with which you move about. **[2]** Here's one of the larger enemies you confront. **[3]** A very big explosion. **[4]** Worth noting the sky in this piccy as it gives an indication of how the atmosphere changes throughout the game.



Blinding flashes like these just have to be seen to be believed.

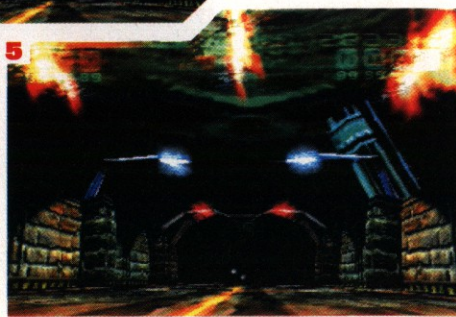
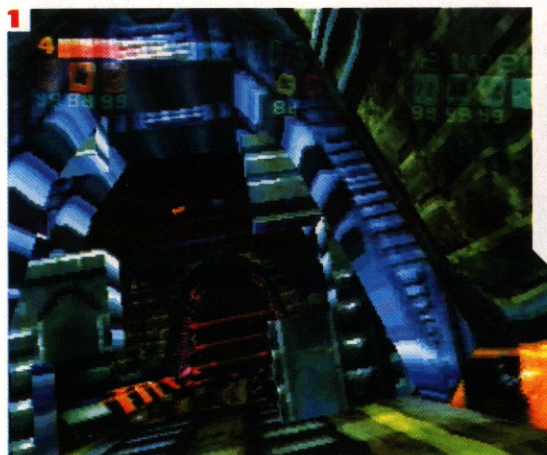
→ top if you so wish (now that's exhilarating). Combine this with the weaponry at your disposal and the enemies you face and you're virtually in gameplay heaven. Did we mention weaponry? Try this for size – machine guns, missiles, lasers and rockets. And that's just your primary weapons. Don't think they're just for show either as you're going to need them to overcome the twelve huge levels which comprise *Tunnel B1*. Secondary weapons include flares, mines, smart bombs and the super smart bomb. All of these can be used to even greater

effect as you learn the tactics you'll need to succeed – this is not a game in which you can simply blast your way to victory.

For instance, there is radioactivity to overcome when certain containers explode. Alarms can be triggered at various times. Doors need to be opened by activating switches. There are shields, the intensities of which are denoted by different colour schemes. Maps are available, there are a whole host of symbols to learn and there are any number of

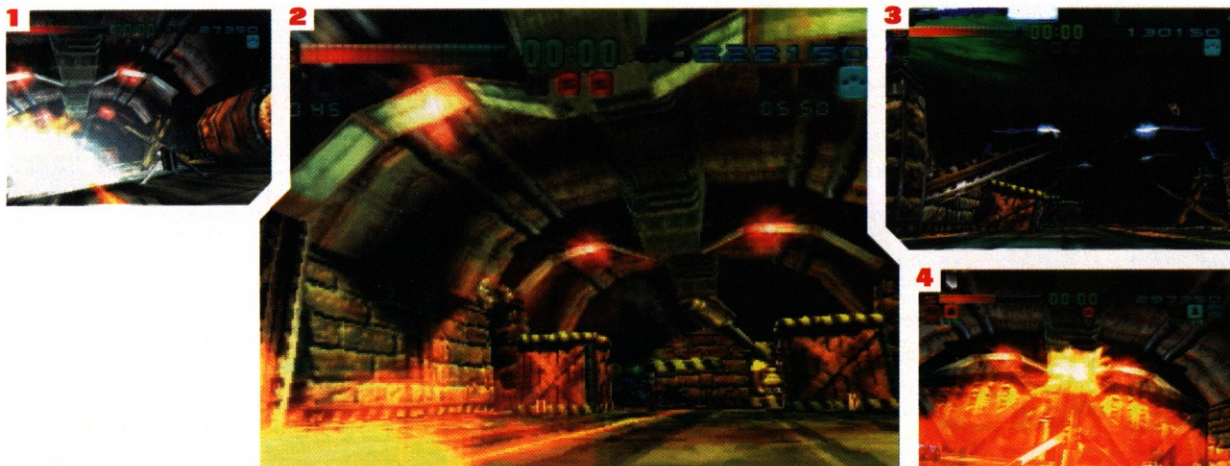


tricks to be gleaned at any time during the game. In fact, if there is a criticism of *Tunnel B1* it's that it's just too hard. There's some reward to be had from a simple blast around the first few easy levels but if you want to get the most out of *Tunnel B1* you'll have to really work at it. All good things come to those who wait though and it's the challenging nature of the gameplay that ultimately makes this the great title it is. Taking out a few crates and blasting away the odd Sten gun is fun for a while, but it's not until the later, much harder levels, that the



[1] The blurring is caused by the breakneck speed we're travelling at. **[2]** Check out the diagram for help. **[3]** Ooh, spooky. Like in all the best games, lighting effects add that extra air of realism. **[4]** This is one of the rather more space-age style tunnels, shiny stainless steel. **[5]** While this is a much more traditional, stone-clad affair.

Tunnel B1



[1] A tunnel vision. [2] Take out these wooden crates, blow away the guns emplacements and then get the hell outta there. [3] Prepare to meet thine enemy. [4] These doors are about to blast open and reveal the foes you must beat if you're likely to continue any further. Get your missiles ready.

Reigning champ

The game from hell that has spawned many monsters since. Although not a direct alternative to *Tunnel B1* it's worth mentioning the leading role that *Doom* has played in the development of games in the Nineties. First released on the PC, computer owners went mad for it and rapidly took the opportunity to link-up and blow their mates to bits. Released last year on the PlayStation, its first perspective shoot 'em up brilliance won it universal acclaim. *Final Doom*, released this year, has continued its reign of terror. Many have tried and failed to capture its essence with *Tunnel B1* being more successful than most. If you haven't played it yet, you must experience for yourself the claustrophobic fear it induces.



Tips

Restore life/energy

Key:



Top up your weapon and life reserves at any point by pausing the game and pressing and holding L1, R1, L2, R2, S, O, X, T.

fun really starts. And if we haven't mentioned them already, the graphics are superbly crafted. The mix of sinister darkness and patches of neon, underpinned with stirring anthems straight out of a million dollar block-buster, means that the atmosphere just builds and builds. If you can stay with it after being killed time and time again while you're fresh, green and vulnerable then believe us, you'll be rewarded. It may be hell in there but keep blasting and you could find this a tunnel of love.



[1] These crates can be used to hide behind, or blown up just for a laugh. [2] The green light means go. So get going.



[1] This is kind of reminiscent of *Wipeout 2097* and almost as fast. [2] A real pea-souper.



Alternatively

Descent

Not as good-looking as *Tunnel B1* this is nevertheless another tense and absorbing 3D blaster built around challenging missions. In fact, this is harder than *Tunnel B1* itself if truth be told.

★★★★



Assault Rigs

Although similarly a combat maze game, this is a genuine alternative by virtue of its two-player option. Deceptively simple (not least in looks) there are hidden depths to its gameplay.

★★★



Essential PlayStation

VERDICT

■ GRAPHICS:
■ SOUND:
■ LIFESPAN:

Superbly sinister 9
A rousing score 8
Big and hard 7

■ GAMEPLAY:
■ PRESENTATION:
■ ORIGINALITY:

Breathless blasting 7
Extravagant 7
Unfortunately not 5

A big, beautiful shoot 'em up which plays like *Doom* in a Ferrari. Very challenging.



Five Star Rating



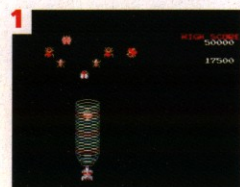
PUBLISHER: SCE
 STYLE: Arcade classics
 PRICE: £44.99



(1) Super Pac-Man had special 'closed' sections of the maze. (2) Find keys to open up these walls. (3) Mappy served his time as Namco's mascot. (4) Dragon Buster was the original RPG. (5) The Museum where you learn about the history of each Namco title. (6) Mappy: A flat but fun platform game.

Namco Museum Volume 2

Nostalgia. It smells like damp sweaty bodies, cigarette smoke filling up a darkened room. Okay, so the arcades stank, but what about the games?



(1) Gaplus: Drag those hapless aliens down in your tractor beam. (2) shoot the Queen. (3) Xevious was a vertical affair. (4) Tanks in Grobda.

The six games in Namco's second collection hold, in embryo, the genetic blueprints for every game ever made. You've got shoot 'em ups (*Grobda*, *Gaplus*), maze games (*Super Pac-Man*), platformers (*Mappy*) and even RPG's (*Dragon Buster*). There are some dead certs here, *Gaplus* (the third of the *Galaxian* trilogy) is very good, *Grobda* (one of those 2D tank games) is decidedly ropy and *Super Pac-Man* is, well, still *Pac-Man* really. There are also a few unexpected gems with *Mappy* providing an enjoyable if rather basic bit of platforming and *Dragon Buster* (the prototype battle-RPG) being unintentionally entertaining. *Xevious*? It's that flat vertical scrolling shoot

'em up that, in a slightly souped-up form, is still popular in launderettes and just about anywhere else where any distraction (no matter how mindless) is appreciated.

As with both *Namco Volumes 1* and *3* you also get a history of all the game in a 'virtual museum' format, showing you such wonders as a genuine *Mappy* circuit board and the original artwork for *Xevious*. This is all very well for five minutes, but once you've seen one board full of chips you really have seen them all. It's about now, after you've had a quick go on all six titles and trudged wearily around the museum, that you might start to feel like you've been had. £45 quid is a lot of money to spend on six old arcade games, and you certainly feel that all the *Namco Museums* combined for the same amount would only begin to offer real value. But that's before you get drawn in by the addictive power of these dinosaurs all over again.

It may not make sense (hey, these are videogames, right?) but play *Gaplus* or *Mappy* or *Dragon Buster* for long enough and, sad to say, they will exert some sort of hold over you. You'll start giggling



(1) Dragon Buster: "Witness my tiny sword and cower, dragon." (2) Gasp! Two different routes!

as you capture an enemy ship in *Gaplus*'s tractor beam, guffaw loudly as you slam a door in some cat's face in *Mappy* and collapse in hysterics as you face up to a ridiculous cartoon dragon in *Dragon Buster*. Like Buster Keaton, Laurel and Hardy or Charlie Chaplin these games remain an acquired taste. If you can stomach the price then they still offer hours of (albeit dated) entertainment.



VERDICT

Essential PlayStation

GRAPHICS: Stone-age 1 GAMEPLAY: Simple but fun 7
 SOUND: Monotonous 2 PRESENTATION: Adequate 6
 LIFESPAN: OK in short doses 5 ORIGINALITY: THE originals 7

Definitely the best Namco collection to get. Buckets of nostalgia and quite good fun.



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Warhawk

The aircraft is **straight out of Aliens**, the plot is full of **James Bondian intrigue** but can it **hope to beat** more modern **blast-busters**?



Blah, blah evil dictator Krel, blah, blah, World War III, blah, blah, who one earth can save us?

Remember the Vulcan bomber? It was that big triangular airplane that used to make your chest vibrate at airshows (no relation to Mr Spock). *Warhawk* is a bit like the Vulcan. That too was hailed as state-of-the-art at the time it came into service. Since then though time has caught up with both but while the Vulcan was decommissioned, *Warhawk* is still taking part in the Great PlayStation Fly-Past. So why should this old war-horse be worth a look?

Warhawk's main attraction is its effects. At a time when the PlayStation was only just beginning to strut its stuff the explosions, vapour trails and general polygon-ness of *Warhawk* made quite an impression. While not quite up to the standard of *Blam! Machinehead* or *Tunnel B1* the quality of its Kabooms is still note-worthy. There



[1] Sea base dead ahead cap'n. That'll need a good blast then. **[2]** Fortunately you have homing missiles that hit the target every time. **[3]** Mission Two's tiresome ravine section. A turkey shoot.



were those who claimed as well that beneath this flashy metal skin lurked some strategic goings-on. Hmm, more strategic than *Galaxian* (definitely) and *Air Combat* (not hard) but hardly up to modern standards, or even the levels of complexity offered by the slightly later *Thunderhawk 2* and *Agile Warrior*. There are missions to complete, there are targets to acquire but it still ends up being a matter of firing off rockets and missiles in every direction and

coming back in to strafe the base/ship/bunker so that everything explodes. You are faced with hostile air units but you're better off leaving these alone than engaging them.

As some relic of the PlayStation's past *Warhawk* does possess a certain brutal beauty. What it misses is both a more complex structure and any form of subtlety. What you see is what you get, big explosions, pretty special effects and, well, no real surprises anywhere along the line. Initially entertaining but eventually tiresome.



[1] A beautiful sunset engulfs the volcano base. **[2]** Watch your shields, one hit on a depleted one could kill you. **[3]** Eruption. **[4]** Inside enemy HQ. **[5]** Finish of this lovely big cruiser thing. Oh go on.



VERDICT

■ GRAPHICS:
■ SOUND:
■ LIFESPAN:

Bright 'n' brash **6** ■ GAMEPLAY:
Cinematic **7** ■ PRESENTATION:
Tough but dull **5** ■ ORIGINALITY:

Predictable **6**
Clear **6**
Aliens aircraft **5**

Impressive blast whose entertainment value plummets in the long-term. Superficial stuff.



Five Star Rating



■ PUBLISHER: Gremlin
 ■ STYLE: Off-road Racer
 ■ PRICE: £44.99

(1) You can choose just how filthy you want the weather conditions. The snow track is very treacherous. (2) View from a bridge. (3) The trucks are built to run over any terrain, that often happens to include other trucks. (4) Even on the simpler circuits, like this grassy little number, there's no real room to overtake. It's just a matter of barging your way through the pack.



Hardcore 4x4

Homer Simpson gut crushed by one, Knight Rider lives in one
 and in Duel some bloke got chased by one. Yes, we're talking trucks...

The first shock when you load-up *Hardcore 4x4* is that, not only is it not a Techno compilation album, but it's not another *Ridge Racer* clone either. Where are the fake ad hoardings? What happened to the tunnel section? Where's the devil car? It's almost reassuring to come across the annoying commentary and tasteless paint-jobs. Phew, it is a racing game after all.

The idea of an off-road driving game isn't

new (witness the abysmal *Off-World Interceptor* and the rather good *Twisted Metal*) but *Hardcore* is the first such game to do things properly, going all the way off road (complete with tricky short-cuts) and keeping the whole thing as a true racer rather than a shoot 'em up on wheels. Perhaps most surprising is that, no doubt due to the grip of those massive tyres, the six truck-type vehicles you get to drive handle well. This is just as well as the terrain they have to over-come is unfriendly to say the least. From sand to snow, rocks to rickety bridges these are 'tracks' only in the loosest sense of the word, ways to get from A to B. As you rocket across meadowy bits or ride up canyon walls the game throws you around at a fair old pace. We're not talking speed of *Wipeout* proportions here



(1) For once, a fairly wide open space, and it's straight. (2) These sharp snowy turns kill your speed. A real shame that. (3) Another accident black-spot. (4) Hang on, this is on tarmac!



but probably fast enough considering the obstacles in your way. The only real criticism is that some of the tracks get too narrow, with sharp turns that slow you down. At least it never lets you get stuck in a rut, with a boost button to power you out of trouble.

The reservations you end up with after playing *Hardcore* for some time are, essentially, the ones you began the game with. Trucks, not very fast are they? Along with a few doubts about the skill required to win (no real racing line or complex breaking needed). Considering the racing line-up for '97 *Hardcore* is lacking that vital split-screen two-player, but what it offers one player is tough and scenic off-road racing.



(1) Two behemoths lock horns in an iced-up canyon. (2) Unlike the forthcoming *Monster Trucks*, the race is a pretty linear affair with just a few short-cuts. (3) Whoa! Now that's a slope. Use extra revs to get up it.



VERDICT

Essential PlayStation

■ GRAPHICS:
 ■ SOUND:
 ■ LIFESPAN:

Flash 4X4s 8 ■ GAMEPLAY:
 Cringe-worthy 4 ■ PRESENTATION:
 Six courses 6 ■ ORIGINALITY:

Gritty 7
 Dull 5
 Fine thanks 8

Looks neat and tidy, handles well but just lacks that palm-sweating adrenaline buzz.



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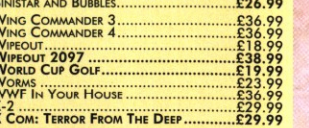
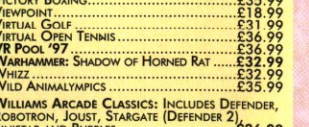
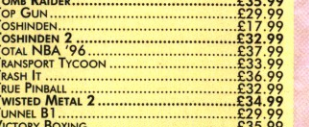
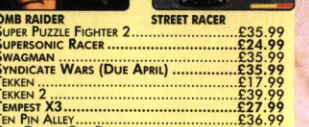
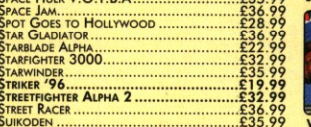
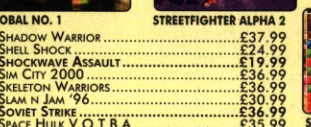
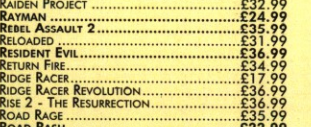
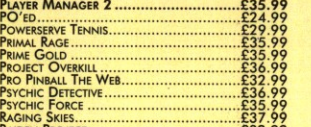
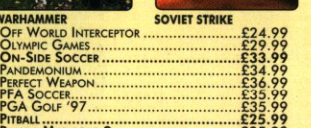
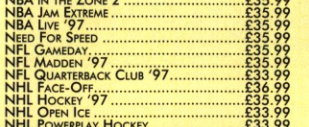
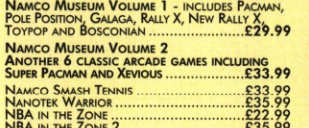
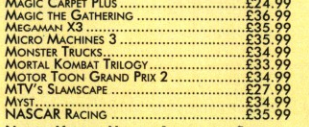
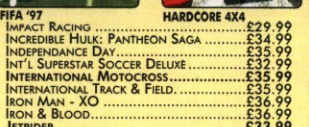
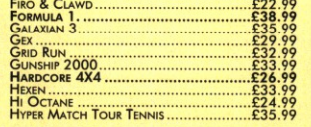
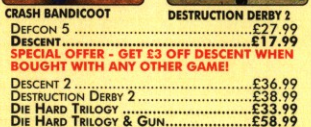
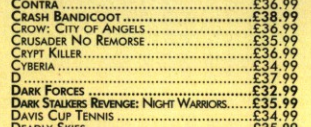
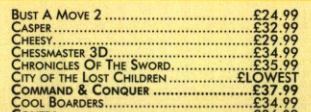
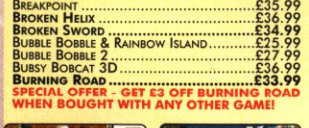
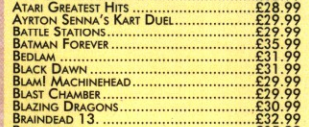
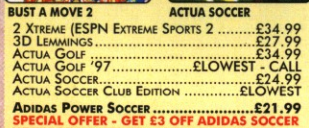
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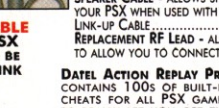
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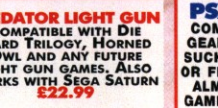
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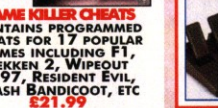
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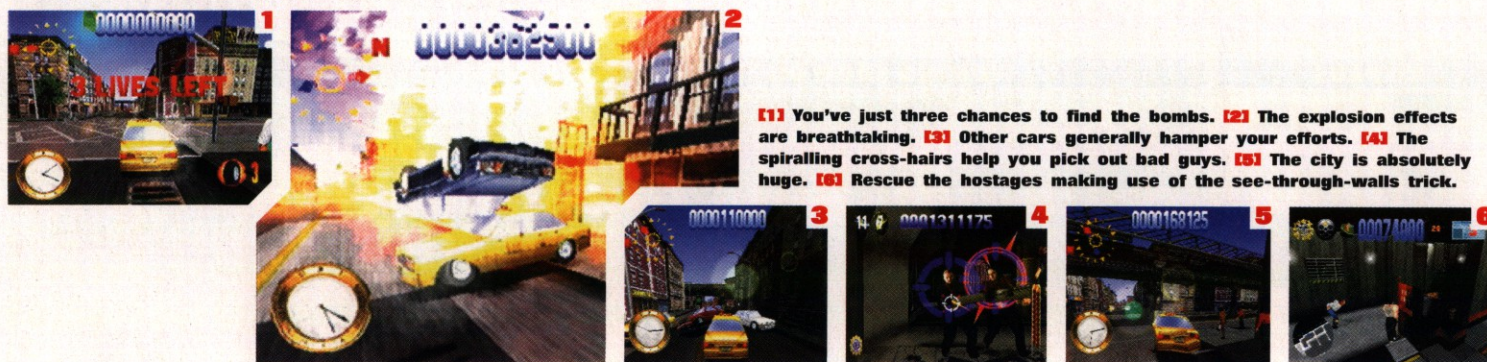
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[1] You've just three chances to find the bombs. [2] The explosion effects are breathtaking. [3] Other cars generally hamper your efforts. [4] The spiralling cross-hairs help you pick out bad guys. [5] The city is absolutely huge. [6] Rescue the hostages making use of the see-through-walls trick.

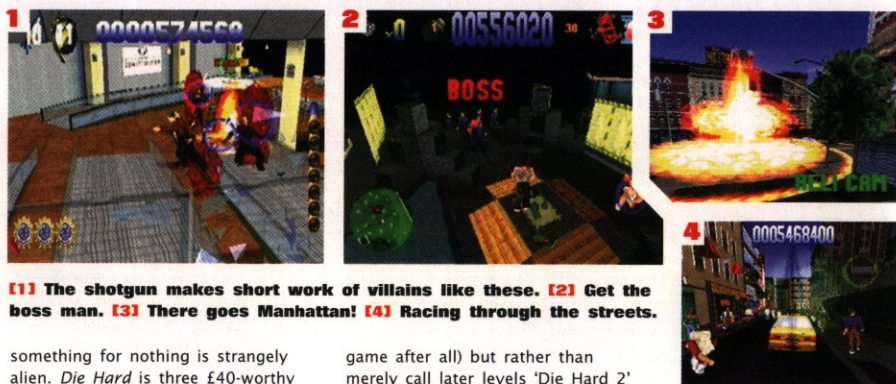
Die Hard Trilogy

Even harder than the films and even more deadly,

Die Hard Trilogy is a triple helping of high-impact action...

Did you see Die Hard again when it was on over Christmas? Top wasn't it? Perhaps you were treated to the Die Hard Trilogy video box set in your stocking via a wealthy relative – great isn't it? Ever wanted to charge around in a vest and blow people away? Well now you can control events from all three movies via your PlayStation.

Guff duly dispatched, let's settle down to business. *Die Hard Trilogy* IS the business. In this day and age, where penny chews are a thing of the past, the artist formerly known as Prince releases overpriced, fan-exploiting triple CDs every ten minutes and rather than getting eight sheets of wrapping paper for fifty pence you get ten for a pound (sheesh) the concept of getting

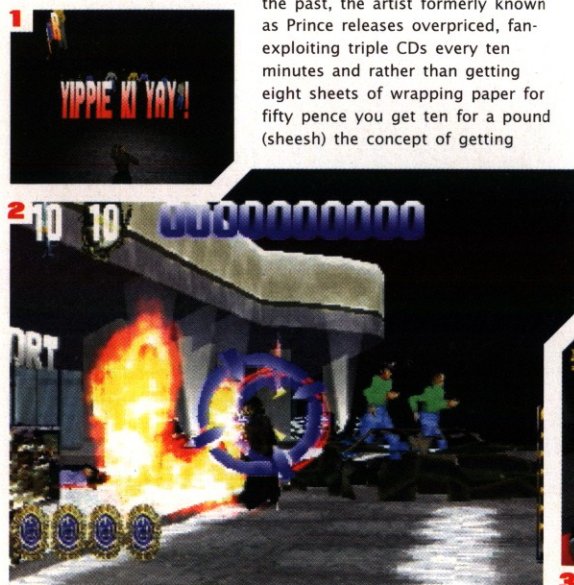


[1] The shotgun makes short work of villains like these. [2] Get the boss man. [3] There goes Manhattan! [4] Racing through the streets.

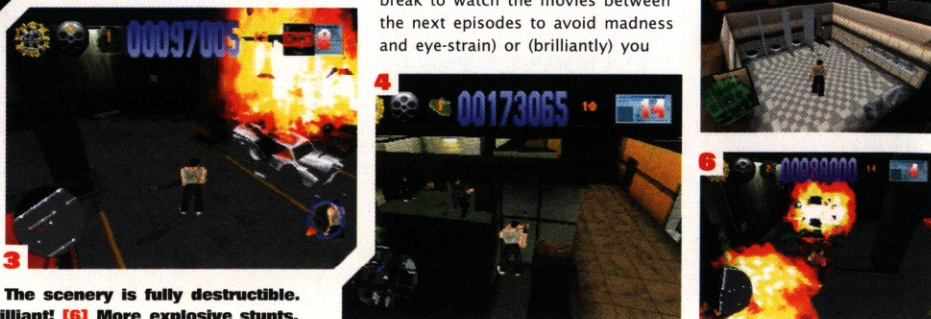
something for nothing is strangely alien. *Die Hard* is three £40-worthy games in one. Recently, Systema released a hand-held 'TV Boy' gadget that you plug into your television, allowing you to play 126 old Atari VCS games for £29.99. Well, *Die Hard Trilogy* is a bargain of near similar proportions. You only get three games here but, by jingo, are they light years better.

And they're different types of games too. All share a love of 3D and polygons (this is a PlayStation

game after all) but rather than merely call later levels 'Die Hard 2' and even later ones '3' each game, like each movie, is of a unique yet comfortably familiar style. All are nothing short of excellent. They succeed in encapsulating much of the atmosphere and pace of the movies they aim to represent. Sound-alike actors provide character voices (Willis's stand-in being indistinguishable from the real thing) and you can either play through each in order (perhaps taking a break to watch the movies between the next episodes to avoid madness and eye-strain) or (brilliantly) you

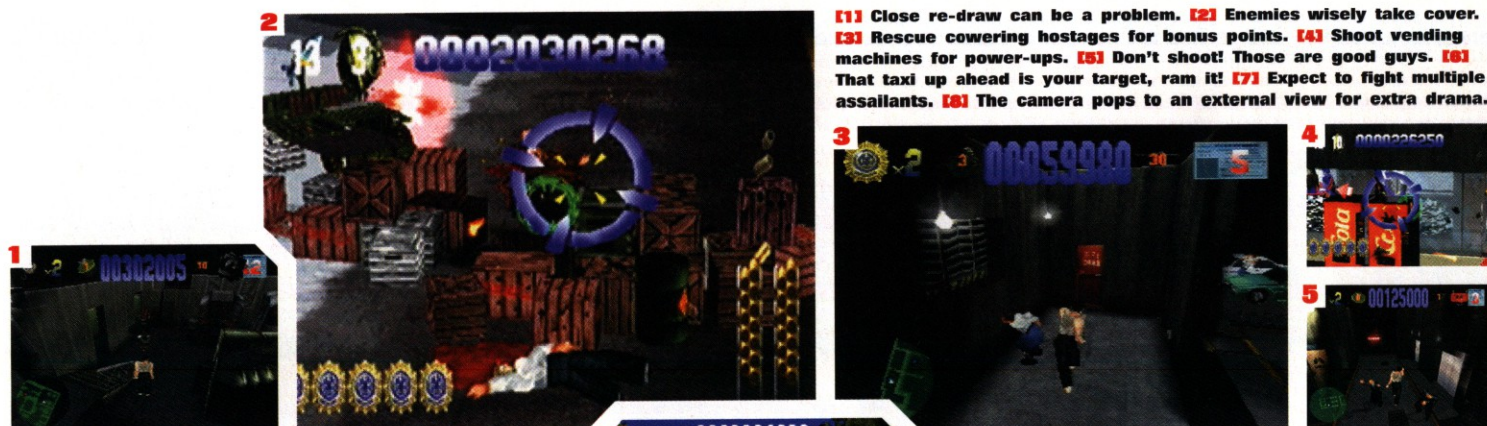


[1] Just what does that mean? [2] Mind the good guys! [3] The scenery is fully destructible. [4] Use the scanner to find your way around. [5] Toilets! Brilliant! [6] More explosive stunts.





PUBLISHER: Electronic Arts
 STYLE: Blaster/ Driving Combat
 PRICE: £44.99



can play whichever you fancy from a cunning menu screen which allows you to save your progress in any one game then have a bash at another before going back again. This really is three games in one.

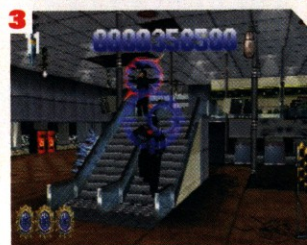
The chances are though that you'll do the right thing and begin with *Die Hard*. Comparisons with *Fade to Black* and *Tomb Raider* are inevitable here. The third person perspective is becoming as popular as the first-person *Doom*-style. This game however, has none of the puzzle-based aspirations of either of its forebears. The name of the game is to kill, kill and kill again. As you jog around, the *DH* world swings and glides about you, scenery and assailants appearing out of the gloom as you approach. A helpful scanner keeps you on the right track, showing you the positions of the walls, the vital extra weapons and bad guys and prevents you from running around in circles. Also evident, represented by friendly



looking blue dots, are the hostages. These sissy gimps squat in corners wringing their hands, shaking their heads and generally acting like craven cowards. Your mission is to kill all the terrorists (merely turn until one is dead ahead and push 'fire') and rescue all the hostages (touch them and they'll suddenly become possessed with bravery enough to mince through the gunfire to the level's exit). Hostage rescues give you points and access to hidden levels in which you must escort the assembled throng through hordes of blokes with guns to a helicopter on the roof. That and the sheer

satisfaction of a job well done.

Curiously, far more satisfying is accidentally cutting down one of your buddies in a hail of misdirected machine gun fire intended for distant attackers. Something



[1] Shoot out the white ceiling tiles for kicks. Practically everything can be shot up. [2] Very occasionally things can look a little messy. [3] Bad guys can leap out from any side. Best have your wits about you at all times, Sgt.



The game is heavily points based. High scores provide extra levels and weapons.

Big screen, big game...

So how do you turn three films into a PlayStation game? Simple, you take scenes from the movie and alter them slightly with a bit of artistic licence...

Die Hard, a film essentially about killing terrorists and rescuing hostages held captive in a high-rise office block has become an over the shoulder-viewed death-dealing mad dash, in which you kill terrorists and rescue hostages held captive in (wait for it) a high-rise office block.

Plot adherence score: Ten out of ten, it's spot on.

Die Hard 2, the comically named 'Die Harder', is a film about the Mrs being on a plane about to be crashed by some terrorists in a church. This has become a *Virtua Cop*-style jog around an airport and surrounding landscape.

Plot adherence score: Hmm, seven out of ten, nice snow.

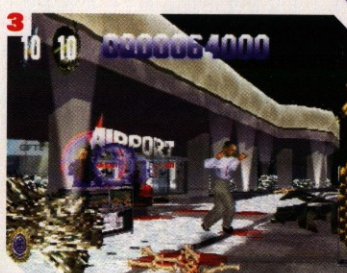
And finally *Die Hard* with a Vengeance, a film about a cunning subterranean robbery and the grudge between Willis and Irons ('Didn't you kill my brother?') has been reduced to a driving game in which bombs must be found before time limits expire or everything goes KABOOM!

Plot adherence score: Two at best (it was one scene).



Essential Playtest

[1] The game is littered with great graphical tricks. Here the sprinklers have come on to extinguish a fire. Nice one. **[2]** The taxi is the first vehicle you can drive. Others may be obtained later - provided you're fast enough to find them and the bombs. **[3]** The blood and skeletons dead baddies leave behind are a nice (though grisly) touch. **[4]** A power bar shows how much more ramming each bomb car requires before it'll explode. **[5]** Blimey! Which one will you take down first? A lightgun add-on will prove invaluable at times.



made even more entertaining by your character's hopelessly inadequate "Oops, sorry pal" apology. More excitement can be found at the end of each level. Upon the death of the final terrorist his mates upstairs send down a bomb in an elevator. You have thirty seconds to find (and thereby defuse)

the device or lose a life. Not since *Descent* (from which the time limit, level end idea has been tangibly stolen) has a game been as thrilling and nerve-wracking. The bombs always appear in the same place in each level, meaning that after a few unfortunate deaths on each you'll learn the route you should take, which is exactly how it should be. It's fantastically entertaining stuff.

After the demise of the final baddie and the successful retaking of Nakatomi Plaza you're off to Washington's Dulles airport for *Die Hard 2*. Are you familiar with the *Virtua Cop* arcade game? Well DH2

is a near-sue-worthy rip-off. You're magically manoeuvred around the 3D scenery, your only control being of the on-screen cross-hairs which you use to target and remove polygonal bad guys. To aid you in picking them out from the lavish 3D scenery, huge circular sights spiral in around them, rotating to show exactly how much time you have to take them out before they start firing back and sapping your strength. Yet again there's a whole arsenal of extra weapons including rocket launchers and rapid-fire M16 machine guns to pick-up by shooting them and (also yet again) there are innocents weaving around amongst the bad guys, making accurate targeting essential in order to gain a 'Good Cop Bonus' and more points, better weapons, and yet more secret areas.

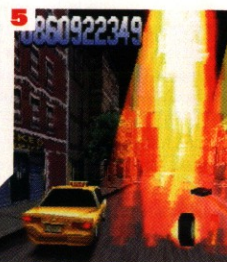
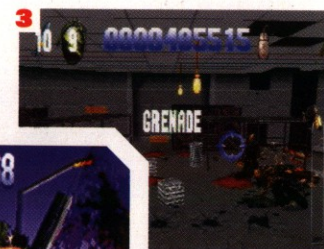
The cross-hairs are controlled via the joystick, which is annoyingly tricky, or by the far more satisfying pointing of a lightgun add-on. We tried a gun from Fire International (the joystick makers) and found it to be perfectly adequate and good fun. Disturbingly, the far more popular



Too late! Here comes the bomb blast's shock wave. Take cover!

X-ray vision...

One of the neatest features in the *Die Hard* episode is the brilliant wall-fading trick employed to ensure that you never lose sight of your character as he picks his way around the increasingly congested levels. As you approach a seemingly solid surface it fades to transparency meaning that when you round corners or leap scenery you can still see what's going on. An amazing effect. The downside to this is that you can also use it to gain an unfair advantage. By walking up to a wall you can see the positions of all the bad guys and hostages on the other side before you enter the room, making picking them off much easier. Still, it's all they deserve, isn't it?



[1] Keep an eye out for lurking snipers. **[2]** Mowing down pedestrians - funny or tasteless? You decide. **[3]** Shooting power-ups helps you through the levels. **[4]** Loitering outside the lift is always a good place to catch the terrorists. **[5]** The PlayStation's lighting effects get used to the full.

Die Hard Trilogy

Target dead ahead, cap'n!

These blokes have got no chance! Just so you don't miss a bomb in *DH3* (the compass indicator only shows the direction of the next bomb, not the distance to it, remember) huge red targets appear around them as you get closer. With the stationary bombers it's best to slow down and drive straight at them to ensure that you don't whizz past and waste valuable time on doing three-point turns. With bomb cars the target is hardly necessary. The very fact that they're tearing off in the opposite direction is evidence enough that they're naughty terrorists who deserve a good ramming.



gun is the Predator from Logic 3 which many shops are packaging with DHT which, at the time of going to press, has dubious targeting performance. For now, we say try one of the other third-party add-ons (there is no official Sony lightgun, incidentally).

Almost as much fun as maiming

bad and good guys alike is the ability to shoot the place up. TV monitors explode convincingly and huge great chunks of polystyrene fall from the ceiling should you aim too high. Also (perhaps best of all) you can riddle the walls with bullet holes which no amount of polyfiller would put right. After clearing the airport and almost destroying it in the process, you're off through tunnels then out onto the runway for a shoot-out around a cargo plane. After this comes a snow-bike chase and a final helicopter-based encounter with the boss man. *DH2*, like the other episodes, is ruddy huge and satisfyingly tough.

At the end of all this action and carnage the final *Die Hard* with a Vengeance episode awaits. Calling

DH3 a driving game is wholly wrong. Yes, you control a car but it handles like nothing you've ever driven before. A simple press of the joypad's shoulder buttons is enough to swing the car around in a highly impressive 90° powerslide, this manoeuvre being essential for guiding your car around the maze-like New York streets in which the game is set. The idea here is that the forces of evil have placed bombs around the city and you must reach them before detonation. A pocket watch on-screen shows the remaining time and this ominously grows to fill the screen (becoming helpfully see-through in the process) as the time expires, making the location of each bomb a highly exciting and tension-inducing affair.

A red compass pointer shows ➔

Tips

Die Hard

Psst. Wanna cheat? Then pause the game by pressing **Start** then press and hold **R2** button while entering these codes:

Key:

X= [X button] T= [T button]

O= [O button] S= [S button]

R1 R1 R2 R2

L1 R1 L2 R2

Invulnerability

Right, Up, Down, S

Max ammo for present weapon

Right, Up, Down, Down, S, Right

50 explosives

Right, S, Down, O

Make blokes fat

Right, S, S, Down

Make dead blokes fly

Down, S, T, Down

Reverse the controls

Right, S, T, Right

Show co-ordinates

Left, O, Down, S

Turn people into skeletons

T x 10, Right x 4

Silly mode

Down, O, O, Down, T, Down

Speed up then slows down

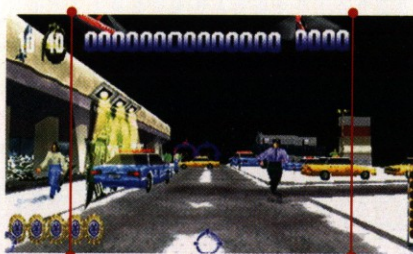
voices **Down, S, S, Right**



[1] Another perfectly good motor bites the dust. [2] Seeing through walls helps you find hostages. [3] A quick trigger finger is essential. [4] Gas bombs are just one of the extras available. [5] If you don't have the machine gun power-up here then you're history. [6] The scanner rotates as you turn to keep you on the right track. [7] Enemies fall depending on where you shoot them. A head shot will send them reeling backwards whereas this poor chap crumples as he cops one in the knee. [8] Blood and gore are predominant throughout.

Panning out

In Die Hard 2 everything is not as it seems. The play area is actually wider than the screen. Move the cross-hairs to the edge of the screen and it shuffles over to expose another good quarter-screen's worth of scenery and baddies. This means that it's possible to cop one in the plums from off-screen assailants, a circular target with accompanying direction arrow appearing to show you just where the SOB is lurking. Rather than being the hair-tearing inconvenience you might first think, it's actually rather fun. Certain power-ups and secret routes are only visible with the screen scrolled over and there's nothing like the satisfaction of plugging an unseen attacker by anticipating his appearance. Neeeaarrgh!

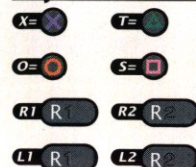


Tips

Die Harder

As before pause the game by pressing **Start** then press and hold **R2** button while entering these codes:

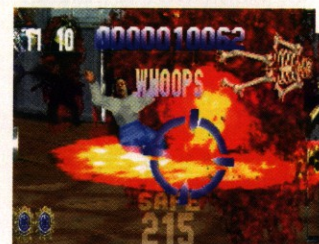
Key:



Enter editor mode
Right, Up, Down, S
 Invulnerability
Down, T, Right, S
 Make blokes thin
Left, T, Right, Down
 Turn everyone into skeletons
Down, S, T, Down
 Max grenades & rockets
Right, S, Left, O, T, Down



[1] Run away or you'll do yourself a mischief. **[2]** Ready for a bit of long range sniping? **[3]** Sorry mate. A hapless passer-by cops it as your missile hits home. **[4]** The bomb countdown looms large.



→ the quickest route to the next bomb and your in-car Samuel L. Jackson sound-alike calls out with various "Go left here" or "Where you goin' Jack?" suggestions. A blue pointer pops up from time to time showing the location of an alternative (and superior) vehicle to the one you're driving, the quandary being should you waste valuable time diverting to get the next, faster car or should you soldier on in your current vehicle hoping that it's fast enough to get you there in time? Again, experience plays a great part here, some cars being essential, others being time-wasting decoys.

Only repeated plays and extreme skill will see you through.

Once the stationary targets have been dispatched things really hot up with the advent of the 'bomb cars'. These are moving targets that require barging and bashing off the road in order to disable the bomb contained within. A damage bar shows just how much more punishment they require. Here the correct choice of car is even more essential as it's possible to end up chasing a car which your slower vehicle simply cannot catch, no matter how many of the turbo power-ups and extra time icons you collect en-route.



After all the bombs have been obliterated the scenery changes (to the wide open spaces of the park) and a curious bonus game appears in which you must race a truck through a tunnel in a scene which is (vaguely) reminiscent of one in the movie. This is the closest any part of the trilogy comes to being a bit disappointing. It is a stupidly easy and rather pointless exercise. Besides this single flaky interlude *DHT* is a near perfect piece of software. Fun, exciting, varied and hugely long-lasting it deserves a place in any collection. Yet another PlayStation must-buy.

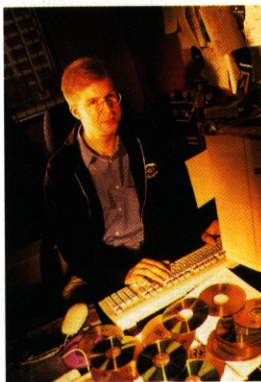


[1] Shoot down the helicopters for bonus weapons. **[2]** A newspaper stand goes off like an atombomb as you fill it full of lead. **[3]** Terrorists often hide amongst the flocks of scampering hostages. **[4]** The scenery is magnificent throughout. **[5]** Relax - they're toast.



Die Hard Trilogy

DHT: How and why



How did *Die Hard Trilogy* come about in its present block-busting form? We went straight to the horse's mouth, DHT's producer Mike Arkin, to find out...

Essential: Was *Die Hard Trilogy* always going to be three separate games?

Mike: *Die Hard Trilogy* started out life as two completely separate projects: *DH1* and *DH2* and a separate *DH3* game. At some point it was realized that it made sense to stick them together into one big cool game. It all sounded so easy back then. Little did we know...

Essential: Did you worry that you wouldn't be able to fit all three of the episodes onto the CD?

Mike: Naa, plenty of room. The biggest problem was the FMV (Full Motion Video), which we were worried would have to displace some of the amazing music, but it fitted and all was well. The music takes up about 70% of the disk, but it's well worth it. I think that it's some of the best game music out there. I know, because the guy next door always bangs on the wall when I play it at home. Of course, my stereo goes up to 11.

Essential: How closely do the in-game surroundings mirror the movies' Nakatomi Plaza, Dulles Airport and New York city streets? Any recognizable features we should look out for?

Mike: Well, (amazing but true fact time) Nakatomi Plaza IS the actual Fox Interactive building in Century City, LA, where I work, so it's roughly based on real blueprints of the real building. Of course, they didn't actually blow it up for the movie (the tower wasn't complete when they were making the movie). They mocked up the top two floors and blew them up for celluloid. We also took pictures in the building for texture reference just to keep things accurate. Because the building is so big, we had to chop the floors in half, but the shape of the building is still there. My office is around somewhere, but we had no time for the office of former US President Ronald Reagan, which is upstairs.

We cheated a bit with *DH2* in that the pictures for texture reference were shot at LAX airport, because it is 3000 miles closer to my house. That was fun, airport security kept throwing me out because I was taking pictures of everything. *DH3*, is the most realistic of the three. There was hours of video shot in New York and many rolls of film of buildings, cars, signs, homeless people and stuff.

Being a New Yorker, I made sure that everything was just right. It also helped that Matt Nagy, the designer of *DH2* is also from NY. Look for the Apollo theatre in Harlem and a few famous buildings in Wall Street!

Essential: Thanks Mike!



Tips

Die Hard With a Vengeance

Die Hard With a Vengeance
Pause the game by pressing
Start then press and hold **R2**
button while entering these
handy codes:

Key:



Displays co-ordinates

Right, Up, Down, S

Mirror ornaments **Right, O,**

Left, Left, S, Down

Infinite lives **Left, O, Up,**

Down, S, Right

999 turbos **O, O, S, S, Down,**

Down, X, X

Change turbos to launches

O, Right, Down, S, T, Left

Fat cars **Left, T, Right, Down**

Floating Fergus heads

O, Down, Down, T, X, S

Flat shaded polygon mode

Down, Up, Left, Left (repeat three times)



[1] You have a limited time to find the bomb car so drive like the wind! **[2]** There they are. Get 'em! **[2]** Washington's Dulles airport is recreated within the game. With a little bit of artistic licence... **[3]** Quick! Get those blokes before they peg it off the screen.

Pass the ketchup!

One thing all three games have in common is the ridiculous amount of blood spilled throughout. With *Die Hard* and *Die Hard 2* it comes from the cruel slaughtering of your fellow man via excessive gunfire (they don't so much die as erupt into a fountain of relish) while in *Die Hard with a Vengeance* it's the ability to inadvertently mount the pavement and mow down great swathes of pedestrians. Drive from the in-car view and the windscreen wipers whip upwards after each impact to clear the screen. The violence is made all the more disturbing by the photographs of real faces texture-mapped onto the in-game character's heads. They wince, they shout, they cry out in pain – they'll scare the living heck out of you!



Escort the hostages off the building in one of the bonus levels.



VERDICT

■ GRAPHICS:

Fast and Detailed 8

■ GAMEPLAY:

Varied and exciting 8

■ SOUND:

Tacky techno, great effects 8

■ PRESENTATION:

Fabulous 9

■ LIFESPAN:

Lasting challenge 9

■ ORIGINALITY:

A bargain for once! 9

Look this gift horse square in the chops. It's three games for forty quid. Buy it immediately.



Five Star Rating

Essential
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[1] Regrettably, *Final Doom* has no new monsters. [2] Behind you! There are more ambushes and traps in most levels. [3] Plenty of nasty barons to lob fireballs at you. [4] Same to you! [5] The shotgun is still the best weapon. [6] The labyrinths are very complex. [7] A courtyard.

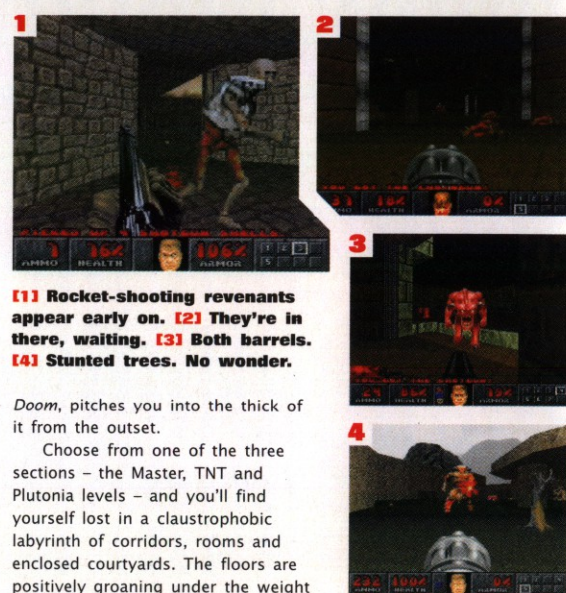
Final Doom

It came from the depths of Hell and changed 3D games forever. Now **Doom has returned.** Essential contemplates the second flowering of Hades...



Once, paranoia was a worrying medical condition, but these days it's a vital ingredient in almost every form of entertainment. From Stephen King to the X-Files, The Fortean Times to Dark Skies ours is an age obsessed with fantasies of the other, the malevolent things out there that nameless people don't want you to know about. But what if it wasn't all a nice safe fantasy, what if they really were out to get you, determined to

infect you and make you one of them? They're not hiding down someone's gullet or buzzing about at night in flying saucers either, they roam corridors in broad daylight baying for your blood. This is why you simply have to play *Doom*. Not because its graphics are state-of-the-art (they're not) or because its sound effects are superb (although they are) no, you have to play *Doom* for its ability to induce extreme paranoia in the sanest of individuals. Girlfriends, fathers, small cousins and even your cat will get palpitations at the distant gurgling of a demonic adversary. They'll flinch too as they come face to face with a ram-headed horror, turning deathly pale in that nanosecond before they blast it back to Hades. Yet if *Doom* built-up gradually to such a crescendo of terror gradually the sequel, *Final*



[1] Rocket-shooting revenants appear early on. [2] They're in there, waiting. [3] Both barrels. [4] Stunted trees. No wonder.

Doom, pitches you into the thick of it from the outset.

Choose from one of the three sections – the Master, TNT and Plutonia levels – and you'll find yourself lost in a claustrophobic labyrinth of corridors, rooms and enclosed courtyards. The floors are positively groaning under the weight of the legions of Hell awaiting you around every corner and behind every door. Those who haven't played *Doom* before will find these seemingly impossible odds daunting and even *Doom* veterans will be surprised at the quality of opposition on the very first level. You'll encounter the nobility of Hell – revenants, knights and barons – when in *Doom* you'd only have



[1] Sidestepping projectile attacks is the key to surviving *Final's* onslaught. [2] There are no new weapons but then what could be better than the double-barrelled shotgun?

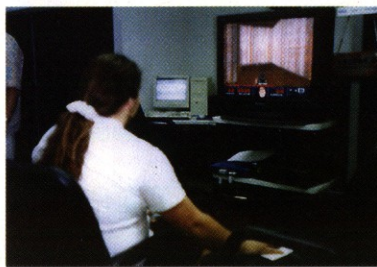




PUBLISHER: GT Interactive
 STYLE: 3D Blaster
 PRICE: £44.99

Mighty mouse

One of the only enhancements that *Final Doom* has to offer is the option to play with that favourite PC controller, the mouse. Plug in your PlayStation mouse and instead of rotating with left and right on your joystick you can spin 360° to any point precisely using the mouse's rubber tracking ball. Complement this with fire and move forwards on the two mouse buttons and you can play one-handed with greater speed of movement than is normally possible.



[1] Collecting health and armour is essential. [2] Open courtyards like this are death-traps with fireballs and bullets coming at you from all directions. [3] Globes are good, either letting you carry more ammo or making you temporarily invisible. [4] Beware, steal a rocket launcher and a whole nest of machine gunners could ambush you. [5] A wall to hide behind. Dead handy.



happened upon a couple of pathetic imps. The idea behind *Final Doom* is really just to provide an extra helping of what everyone loved about the original game. And this is exactly what it does, no more and no less, presenting 32 new levels combining levels designed by *Doom*'s creators, Id Software and those made by fanatical PC *Doom* players. Many of the designs are masterworks of brutality and cunning, drawing you into the basic rotating, running and blasting gameplay that *Doom* perfected. *Final*

Doom is full of nasty surprises, walls that open up behind you letting nasties in, floors that fall away to drop you into a kill-or-be-killed firefight, courtyards that suddenly leave you exposed to attack from every direction. It's quite an achievement that even the most cautious, sidestepping *Doom*-heads can fall foul of these traps, finding themselves cornered with no way out except through half a ton of demon flesh.

If you're looking for other enhancements over the original then *Final Doom* is bound to disappoint. There are no new monsters or weapons to get to grips with and precious few differences graphically (some textures and weapons have been touched-up). It does offer a new control method

using the PlayStation mouse. The mouse allows for faster more fluid movement through *Final*'s levels and has the added advantage of being an analogue controller, letting you rotate on the spot precisely so it's easy to turn, blow something away behind you and then whip back to face any frontal assault. That said, the original controls were none too shoddy either with sidestep on the shoulder buttons so this is really more an additional extra than a vital feature.

The problem is that although initially very tough, *Final Doom* is really just 32 new levels seemingly played on a new difficulty setting; 'Final Nightmare'. Just like when you turn up the difficulty on the original game, at first each level seems



[1] *Final Doom* has a slightly more out-of-door feel than the original. [2] Throw the exit switch and you could be surprised by an ambush. [3] As always, running backwards when faced with a powerful adversary is a good idea. [4] Crazy paving with a running lava motif. Now kitsch. [5] Look, it's the sign of the devil! Or a useful sniper's slot. [6] The distant mountains exude a menacing presence. And low cloud. [7] Never ever get trapped in a corner with one of these.

And finally?

Although *Final Doom* is, according to its developers Williams, the final installment in the saga, *Doom* seems destined to live-on in a variety of *Doom* 'clones' that copy its distinctive 3D, first person 'into the screen' perspective. *Hexen* is a swords & sorcery epic due to be converted by Williams themselves while *Disruptor* and *Tenka* are futuristic *Doom*-clones with more lasers than demons. None, however, recreate that *Doom* magic.



[1] Enter with caution. Darkened rooms are packed with enemies. **[2]** Power-up. **[3]** Crafty beggar is teleporting in behind you. **[4]** Dead. **[5]** Red sky at night, good chance of blood stains on the carpet. **[6]** Spirit-skull thing. **[7]** That's what they will do to you if you fail.



impossibly hard but eventually you do get used to the craftier traps, learn to be more sparing with your ammo and gradually start working through the levels. As such *Doom* veterans are likely to find *Final* enjoyable, but too short-lived. In contrast, if you've never played *Doom* before than *Final* could prove frustratingly hard as you

already need to know most of the tricks before entering its deadly maze of corridors and rooms. *Final Doom*, then, is likely to appeal to the intermediate *Doom* player who found the first game hard but enjoyable, to completists who must have every Hellish chapter and to confirmed addicts who just can't get enough. The quality of *Final*

Doom's levels makes up to some extent for what they lack in quantity but the first game, with its 64 levels gradually rising in difficulty, still has the edge when it comes to looking at all-round value.

It's that simple. Multiply *Final Doom* by two and you would have had a sequel that was better than the original game. As it is, despite retaining that *Doom* magic, *Final* is a last chapter that ends too abruptly, leaving you feel slightly cheated.



[1] Pistol? Bah! Run forward and pick-up that shotgun and stop poncing about. **[2]** Plenty of subterranean passageways mean that *Final* still retains some of *Doom's* claustrophobic feel. **[3]** The gateway to Hell. **[4]** Keeping one imp in front of another ensures that any fireballs that No 2 fires just hit No 1 in the back.



Alternatively

Doom

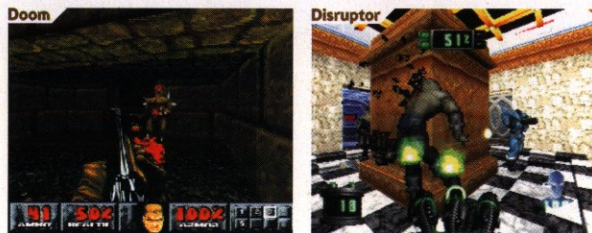
The original and still the best. 64 levels of gut-blasting action and an atmosphere that, as yet, no 3D game has been able to match.

★★★★★

Disruptor

A worthy alternative, *Disruptor* is the prettiest *Doom* clone and boasts wonderful effects. Just too short.

★★★★



VERDICT

Essential PlayStation

GRAPHICS:

SOUND:

LIFESPAN:

Gothic 9

Chilling 8

Hard but short 7

GAMEPLAY:

PRESENTATION:

ORIGINALITY:

Gut-blasting 9

Functional 8

Doppelganger 4

Without any significant innovations *Final* is more like an add-on than a full-on sequel.



Five Star Rating

The future is about to become history

EXCALIBUR

2555 AD

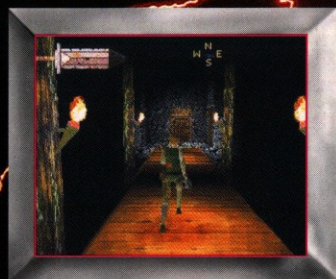
A totally unique and ground-breaking adventure, combining the best graphical elements of *Tomb Raider* and the atmosphere, depth and playability of *The Legend of Zelda*.

Plus, massive panoramic 3D environments and intricate consuming puzzles make *Excalibur 2555AD* an absolute epic.

Featuring: over 200 massive locations, 80 fully talking characters, incredible realistic light-sourcing, intriguing puzzles and hand-to-hand combat.

"...could well do for 3D action adventures what *Tomb Raider* did for 3D platformers" **EDGE**

"...has atmosphere in spades" **PlayStation plus**



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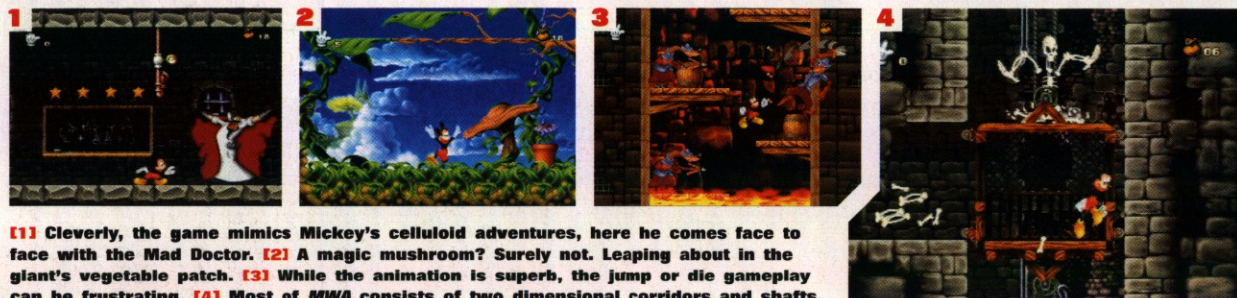
The Studio, 62-64 Bridge Street, Walton-on-Thames, Surrey KT22 1AP

Tel: +44 (0)1932 222 232 Fax: +44 (0)1932 252 702

e-mail: telstar@dial.pipex.com web site: www.telstar.co.uk

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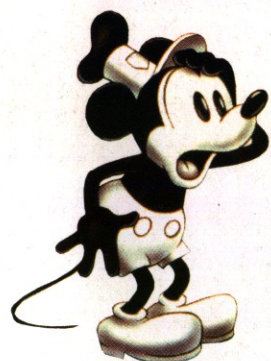




[1] Cleverly, the game mimics Mickey's celluloid adventures, here he comes face to face with the Mad Doctor. **[2]** A magic mushroom? Surely not. Leaping about in the giant's vegetable patch. **[3]** While the animation is superb, the jump or die gameplay can be frustrating. **[4]** Most of *MWA* consists of two dimensional corridors and shafts.

Mickey's Wild Adventure

Imagine a world without guns,
where no killer robots or evil generals aid plot development.
Uncle Walt did, and look at the adventure it got him...



If you're up early enough on Saturdays it's likely that you'll end up watching the almost non-stop cartoons that run from 7am to Middyay. In amongst the transforming killer toasters and legions of space dogs you can still find a certain M Mouse cavorting, slapsticking and squeaking in what's billed as the classic cartoon slot. But if this short helping of Disney's favourite rodent isn't enough for you then *Mickey's Wild Adventure* provides hours of surprisingly cartoon-identical antics. Yet with no



Dem dry bones. Vault over them and avoid the ghostly cleavers.

guns, no cybernetic enhancements and definitely no scantily-clad girl sidekicks (we're afraid Minnie doesn't really count) just how much fun is it hanging out with Walt's geriatric pal?

While Mickey's world may not be especially violent, fast or sexy, it is sweetly pretty. Beginning in mock grainy black and white you soon progress onto MM's later trademark brightly coloured efforts (even the Disney castle is in here if you look close enough). The action is fairly predictable, you leap

up onto ledges, jump on baddie's heads, swing from ropes and throw things at end of level bosses to deplete their energy. There are diversions from the straight move left and right platform format. In one level Mickey gets chased towards you 'out of the screen' by an angry moose (looking a bit like a flatter Crash Bandicoot). In another interlude he clammers up a spinning fake-3D spiral staircase, avoiding tumbling crates. But if you're looking for true innovation then *Mickey's Wild Adventure* won't satisfy you, a much better bet would be the true 3D *Jumping Flash 2*.

In fact, like Mickey himself, *MWA*'s appeal comes from this ever-friendly, no-surprises, no chance of taxing your grey matter construction. What you see really is what you get, Mickey Mouse leaping around, avoiding traps and generally behaving all hyperactive. Yet the game could still retain all these qualities and offer a much greater depth of challenge than it does. Without any significant



Later on colour Mickey meets his black and white alter-ego.

[1] The action begins in black and white with colour gradually seeping in. **[2]** A familiar castle. **[3]** Keys open doors. **[4]** These green ghosts are surprisingly scary.





PUBLISHER:

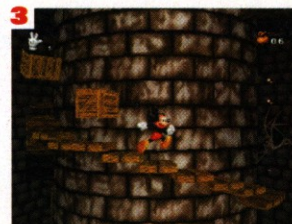
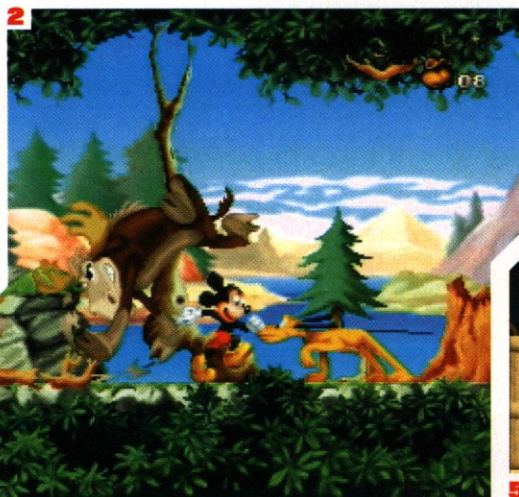
SCE

STYLE:

Platformer

PRICE:

£44.99



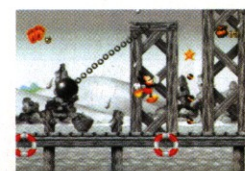
[1] Nasty Pete is one of the game's bosses. It's a case of jumping on his head or throwing marbles at him until he explodes. **[2]** Pluto points to where the angry mouse will appear next. Take his advice and skip merrily out of the way. **[3]** Now that's a bit different, Mickey runs around a spinning tower that manages to look very slightly 3D. **[4]** Leaping up onto window-sills and ledges will allow you to collect more ammunition. **[5]** A feast frequented by dangerous multi-coloured, goggle-eyed butterflies.

improvements over the near-identical *Mickey Mania* from the 16-bit SNES you'd think there'd be enough room on the disc to do a little bit more. There could be more puzzles for you to solve, different special powers to collect, sub-games to take part in. Or you could have an RPG element, letting you talk to each character in cutesy speech bubbles, swap objects and keys with them or cast spells as Mickey the sorcerer's apprentice. Any of these would be welcome additions that would increase the game's lifespan. But no. *Mickey's Wild Adventure* is just Mickey's Walking Right and Jumping A Lot Adventure.

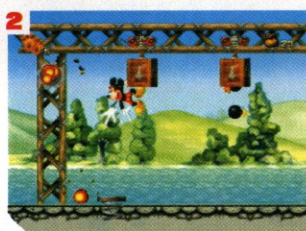


But if you've read this far these kind of been there, done that criticisms probably aren't what you want to hear. What you want to know is whether it's the sort of nice, safe, comfy platform game that fans of the dinner-plate eared one will play and enjoy. The answer would be a resounding 'yes' if two

aspects of the game didn't conspire to annoy. The first is that common platform game complaint Frustrating Death Syndrome. There are many frustrating ways to die in *Mickey's Wild Adventure*, mostly involving swinging into something nasty that has just appeared on-screen or just missing grabbing onto the things you're supposed to swing on. The second problem is the game's length, while not being criminally short it certainly doesn't offer the same depth of challenge as *Rayman* or *Crash Bandicoot*, so an early finish might leave you feeling that £45 was a bit steep. An extra cute but otherwise average platformer.



Dodge the wrecking ball. How unoriginal.



Alternatively

Rayman

A much-overlooked but beautifully crafted 2D platform game. A clever system of power-ups, enormous, colourful levels and varied enemies make this a little gem. ★★★★★

Jumping Flash 2

The better of the two *Flashes*, this is an innovative and enjoyable true 3D platform game that loses out only because it's far too easy. ★★★



VERDICT

GRAPHICS:

Virtual Mickey™ 8

GAMEPLAY:

Leap into the known 6

SOUND:

Dull toons 4

PRESENTATION:

Clean-cut 8

LIFESPAN:

Limited 5

ORIGINALITY:

Copy-mouse! 2

Whether this becomes enchanting or annoying depends on your love for Disney's main mouse.



Five Star Rating

Essential PlayStation

Essential Selection

Essential PlayStation

52
III

SPEED THRILLS

IF YOU WANT TO BE FIRST THEN YOU'LL HAVE TO RACE SMARTER AS WELL AS FASTER. TAKE POLE POSITION WITH OUR REVIEW OF THE SEASON, GET A FLYING START WITH OUR RUN-DOWN OF THE TOP FOUR RACERS AND KEEP WINNING WITH OUR CHEATS AND TACTICS — PLUS! WHAT'S COMING UP FAST IN '97...

Essential Selection

1995-96: SEASON REVIEW

If you visited a videogame arcade in 1994 you'd find one game genre totally dominant.

Racing games were everywhere, taking up the most floor space with their bulky cabinets and taking the most money out of punters' pockets. They had wooed gamers away from the spate of 2D fighting games by virtue not only of their better graphics, four player link-ups and specialised cabinets but also because of one magic ingredient; realism. Where previous arcade games had been flights of fancy into realms of monsters and magic, these new racers were intimately tied to the everyday experience of driving; accelerating, cornering, sliding. A quick glance at console releases of a similar vintage will confirm that their attentions were elsewhere, still concentrating on platformers, beat 'em ups and sports games. There was simply no home format that offered games approaching the sophistication of the new racing games. But all that was about to change.

THE NAMCO HERITAGE

September 29th 1995; the UK launch of the PlayStation coincided with the release of not one but two classic racing games. *Ridge Racer* was the first fruit of Sony's relationship with arcade giants Namco. Namco, originally partners with Sony's rivals Nintendo, brought phenomenal arcade experience to the new alliance. Beginning with *Space Invaders* spin-offs like

innovation would result in the 1993 *Ridge Racer* coin-op.

Influenced by both the cartoony *Out Run* (1986) and the realistic if somewhat spiky *Virtua Racing* (1992), *Ridge* plotted a middle course with day-glo cars racing through frighteningly real winding city streets. Two years later this arcade game would arrive on the PlayStation in what many would call the best arcade conversion ever. The era of home racing had begun.

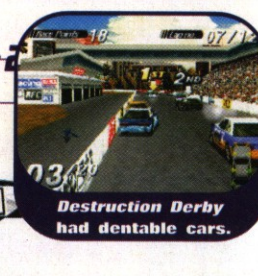
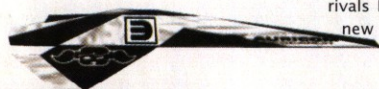
Even when you looked closely it was hard to spot the join. Everyone knew that *Ridge Racer* on the £250 PlayStation couldn't be as good as *Ridge Racer* on a £2000 arcade machine but the important thing was that it seemed like it was. There was the familiar cityscape, the cute day-glo cars and, most importantly, the speed to which *Ridge* junkies had become addicted. *Ridge Racer* had arrived on a home machine and it was awesome. Yet this was only half the story.

PSYGNOSIS: THE OUTSIDERS

By the time the PlayStation had reached the UK it had been joined by a relative unknown, *Wipeout*, a racing game produced by Sony's closest UK developers, Psygnosis. Previously Psygnosis

SPEED: 299MPH

SPEED: 180MPH



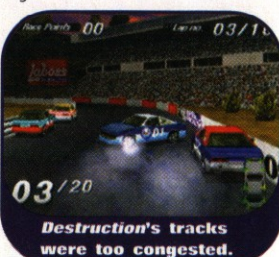
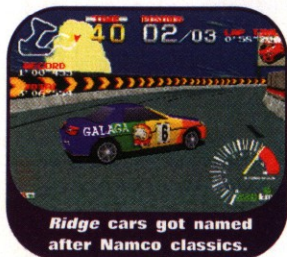
SPEED: 132MPH

SPEED: 200MPH

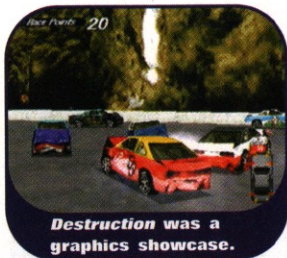
Galaxian and *Galaga* (1981) and the classic maze game *Pac-Man* (1980), in 1982 Namco went on to produce the seminal racing game *Pole Position*. While still primitive by today's standards *Position* was way ahead of its time in many respects. Rather than the overhead view of the earlier *Rally X* (1980) in *Pole Position* you raced 'into' the screen with the red and white kerbs of the track scrolling around you. The gameplay was simplicity itself, requiring you only to accelerate and then nudge left or right to take corners or work your way up through the pack. It was the new visual style that impressed though, a style that after a lot more

had been known for the pretty but shallow *Microcosm* and the deep but hardly cutting-edge *Lemmings* series. *Wipeout* was to change all this, a game of such quality and style that no-one could believe it had been purpose-built for the PlayStation and had never graced the arcades. Its novel futuristic approach with super-fast sleds floating above a writhing three dimensional track perfectly complemented *Ridge Racer*. *Ridge* provided a masterful illusion of reality, while *Wipeout* offered a fantasy so convincing that it had people falling off chairs trying to make it round a sharp corner. While to some extent *Ridge* has been eclipsed, *Wipeout* is still acknowledged as an all-time classic.

The real proof that realistic racing was here to stay was the smashing success of another Psygnosis product, *Destruction Derby*. At its release in October '95 it broke all retail records becoming the fastest selling PlayStation game ever. While in hindsight its faults are all too obvious so are the reasons why it became a European best-seller. Although the tracks were fairly simple the cars were amazingly detailed, deforming after every collision, driving visibly wonkier and eventually grinding



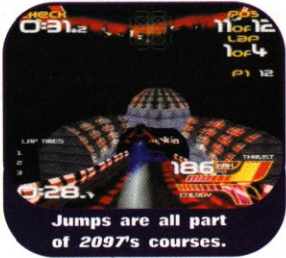
SPEED THRILLS



Destruction was a graphics showcase.



Wipeout 2097's fab two-player link-up.



Jumps are all part of 2097's courses.



F1's replay goes in for the close-up.



F1's superb handling made it stand out.

to a halt in a cloud of black fumes. This, combined with a surprising grasp of real-world physics that sent your car ricocheting off walls like a pinball, gave *Destruction* a unique, gutsy feel. Despite its fatal flaw – that your car usually broke down before it could cross the finish line – *Destruction* showed just how close to reality driving games could get.

HAMCO'S SUMMER

Trying to cash in on *Destruction*'s success, there followed a spate of racing releases at the rate of almost two a month. Perhaps the most notable was *Twisted Metal*, more of a car combat game than a pure racer that had an excellent two-player mode using a horizontally split screen. *Hi-Octane* was another split screen two-player but one that sadly lacked the excellent graphics PlayStation owners had come to expect.

technically correct proved somewhat visually disappointing. In every department though *F1*'s class was to shine through surprising everyone with its amazingly realistic handling and delighting all with its incredibly detailed rendered tracks. No wonder then that it became an instant best-seller when it hit the shelves in September leaving the rather more workmanlike *Andretti Racing* for dust.

Before the year was out Psygnosis would produce yet another top quality racer in the form of *Wipeout 2097*, an update of the year-old *Wipeout*. Introducing both an easier and a harder racing class and more weapons, tracks and racing sleds to choose from, *Wipeout 2097* appeared more accessible and more polished than the original. Although many *Wipeout* veterans were sceptical about what seemed to be an 'easy option' as the months have passed *Wipeout 2097* has grown in



Twisted Metal was a battling racer.



Andretti Racing couldn't match F1.



Andretti let you race stock cars.



F1 has beautiful rendered tracks.



Destruction lived up to its name.

SPEED: 199MPH

SPEED: 139MPH

Conversions from other formats were popular with a bike racing game, *Road Rash*, and a more conventional car racer, *The Need for Speed*, both making the transition from the 3DO console. Neither made the most of the PlayStation's unique graphics abilities. It wasn't until June '96 that the next big, fast thing arrived in the shape of *Ridge Racer Revolution*, the follow-up to the original *Ridge Racer*. More cars, more varied tracks plus different tactics and a faster game engine ensured that *Revolution* streaked ahead of the somewhat mediocre pack, eclipsing all but *Wipeout* with its straight-line speed and heart-stopping cornering. So well-received was it that a clone followed only two months later in the form of *Impact Racing*. Trying to be *Revolution* with guns, *Impact* singularly failed to keep up with its illustrious role model.

PSYGNOSIS: DOUBLE CHAMPIONS

By late Summer rumours were already circulating that Psygnosis, the creators of both *Destruction Derby* and *Wipeout*, were developing an even more visually stunning racing game based around the Formula 1 license. Unlike *Destruction* or *Wipeout*, *Formula 1* attempted to duplicate real world racing to a degree never before seen on the PlayStation. *F1* would include all the cars, all the teams, all the tracks and all the drivers from the '95/'96 season. Previous Formula 1 games on other formats while being

1995

Wipeout
Ridge Racer
Destruction Derby
Twisted Metal
Cyberspeed

1996

Hi-Octane
Road Rash
Off-World Interceptor

	Need for Speed	March
Sept	Ridge Racer Revolution	June
Sept	Burning Road	June
Oct	Impact Racing	Aug
Dec	Formula 1	Sept
Dec	Andretti Racing	Sept
	Supersonic Racers	Oct
	Wipeout 2097	Dec
Jan		
Jan	1997	
Feb	Destruction Derby 2	Jan

SPEED:
Essential PlayStation

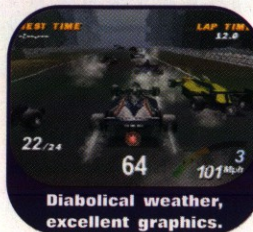


ESSENTIAL SELECTION

1st: FORMULA 1

Like pop groups games are often divisive, setting one person's tastes against another's and causing even the best of mates to fall out. *Formula 1* however belongs to that elite group of games (*Doom*, *Bust-A-Move 2*) that everyone – grannies, girlfriends, small children, your dustman – will just love. The key to this mass adulation is that, unlike most games, it delivers everything it promises. It looks like an F1 race. It has all the cars, drivers and tracks from an F1 race. It makes you feel like you're actually driving in an F1 race. Short of wearing fireproof overalls and a helmet with a tube in it you can't get closer to the real thing. Psygnosis cleverly hedged their bets by including an arcade mode that is friendly and accessible along with the

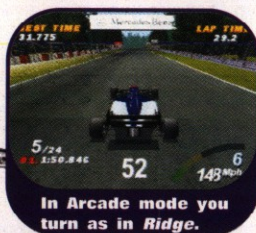
tougher, but ultimately more rewarding Grand Prix setting. Play Grand Prix and, like all the best racing games, you'll have to learn a new driving style. Smooth cornering, split-second braking and following the racing line are all essential if you want to stay on the track, never mind win a race. As your skills improve you can increase the blocking skills of other cars, turning on damage and tyre wear until you're as quick, cool and consistent as the very best in the world. A beautifully crafted, wonderfully challenging racing simulation. The race champion.



Diabolical weather, excellent graphics.



Cutting corners can send you off.



In Arcade mode you turn as in Ridge.



Grand Prix: It all gets very slidey.

ALTERNATIVELY

Andretti Racing

Competent but unexciting US-style racer. Solid split-screen mode but not enough one-player competition. ★★★

Ayrton Senna Kart Duel

Bad handling prevents this Japanese karting escapade from being fun. Awkward and unrewarding. ★

Burning Road

Failed attempt at a PS Sega Rally. Lots of slippage but

dodgy views and cars make this dull. *DD2* is superior. ★★

Cyberspeed

Derivative futuristic racing game with no personality and even less decent gameplay. ★

Destruction Derby

Pretty but ultimately unsatisfying racer that involves lots of fun crashes and lots of annoying breaking-downs. ★★★

Hardcore 4X4

If you were planning to race someone 4X4 trucks would not exactly be your first choice. Still, this looks and plays fine. Just not exhilarating. ★★★

Hi-Octane

Sub-standard graphics stall this racer before it starts. A shame as the split-screen dog-fights are good. ★★

Impact Racing

Ridge Racer clone that adds weapons and takes away the

SPEED: 137MPH

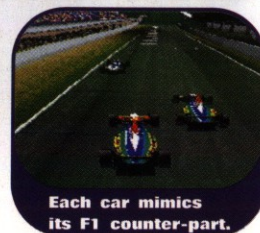
SPEED: 200MPH

SPEED: 299MPH

SPEED: 180MPH



F1: All 35 drivers and 17 tracks.



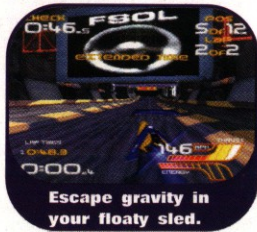
Each car mimics its F1 counter-part.

ESSENTIAL SELECTION

2nd: WIPEOUT 2097

Contrasting sharply with the meticulous realism of *Formula 1* is the game that races in a world all of its own. *Wipeout 2097* is a return to the futuristic sled racing of 1995's *Wipeout*. This is pure fantasy, a roller-coaster ride through insanely snaking tracks with jumps, chasms and seemingly impossibly sharp corners. The unique feel of *Wipeout 2097* stems from its highly responsive floating sleds that can be flipped on their sides to scrape round a particularly nasty turn as if auditioning for a part in *The Dukes of Hazard*. 2097's idiosyncrasies don't end here by any means though, another element is its range of weapons and power-ups. Used wisely these can speed your progress around the winding circuits but fired at random they can often do you more harm than good. Visually this is just as

convincing as *F1*, with its amazing lighting effects, themed decor and incredible sense of movement you will really believe you are competing in the Formula 1 of the 21st Century. While it perhaps lacks the mass appeal of *F1*, *Wipeout 2097* has attracted a following of fanatically loyal acolytes who will sing its praises until they're blue in the face. Music from techno gods The Chemical Brothers and Underworld doesn't exactly hurt. It'll never be everyone's favourite but some will dare to say that it's even better than the mighty *F1*.



Escape gravity in your floaty sled.



You race against 12 opponents.



Now your ship can be destroyed.



Turn smoothly to maintain speed.

OUT IN FRONT

ESSENTIAL SELECTION

OUT IN FRONT

3rd: RIDGE RACER REVOLUTION

If old-fashioned arcade excitement is what you're after then look no further than *Ridge Racer Revolution*. While compared to *F1* its graphics aren't exactly realistic, it's this very cartoony charm that makes *Revolution* great. Immediately playable, *Revolution* has a lot more depth than might at first be apparent. For a start there are eight extra cars to add to your basic four through completing *Galaga* on the loading screen and then there are three super cars to race for once you know the tracks backwards. If you were being pedantic you could say that

Revolution only has one track to which extra hazards are added to form the Novice, Intermediate and Expert courses. In reality these tracks do feel different enough to be separated as do the 'mirror' versions of the circuits that appear once you've won through on each one. While powersliding is, sadly, too finicky in every other way this is a big improvement on the original *Ridge*.

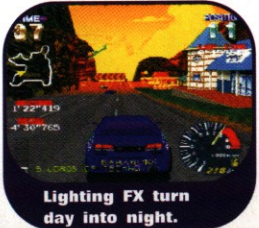
The addition of a rearview mirror and less punishing collisions lend an extra strategic blocking element to every race, vital if you're to hold off the advances of the lightning quick super-cars. Measured at first the pace soon becomes nerve-tinglingly quick and for pure twitchy lane-swapping, frantic overtaking and nail-biting acceleration *Revolution* is unbeatable.



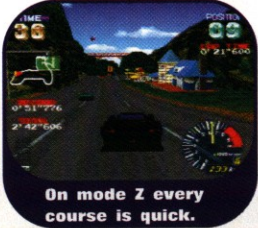
There are three super cars to get.



Use the rearview mirror to block.



Lighting FX turn day into night.



On mode Z every course is quick.



Revolution enjoys Jap techno tunes.

ALTERNATIVELY

fluid gameplay we all loved. Disappointing. ★★

Motor Toon GP

Fun but limited cartoon racer. The ghost mode is good but some of the tracks aren't. Not a serious contender. ★★★

NACARS Racing '96

Smooth, featureless and grey describes not just the tracks but the game as a whole. No realism and no thrills give this racer no chance. ★

Need for Speed

Our high hopes for this conversion were dashed with poor quality graphics shouldering most of the blame. The handling's at fault too. ★★

Off-World Interceptor

All-round nasty off-road driving nightmare. Comes complete with an unplayable two-player mode. ★

Penny Racers

If you'd spent a penny to play this you'd be disappointed. Inexcusably ancient and awkward arcade drivel. ★

Ridge Racer

Classic arcade racer that still looks very impressive despite its considerable age. Not as fast or flash as *Revolution* but still dead good. ★★★★★

Road Rash

Combative bike racer with too much brawn and too little

brains. Jerky, dull and unconvincing. ★★

Supersonic Racers

Inventive, smallscale racer that is excellent fun for four players but a little disappointing on your lonesome. ★★★★★

Twisted Metal

Vastly under-rated car combat game. Doesn't look that great but offers a brilliant head-to-head two-player race and blast. Kill people with an ice-cream van. Chortlesome. ★★★★★

Wipeout

Only the slightly more polished sequel *Wipeout 2097* has displaced this from the winner's podium. One of the purest and best racers available. ★★★★★

SPEED: 199MPH

SPEED: 139MPH

ESSENTIAL SELECTION

OUT IN FRONT

4th: DESTRUCTION DERBY 2

At times the original *Destruction Derby* was more a war of attrition that just happened to involve cars rather than a true racing game. The crashes were certainly spectacular but tended to get in the way of actually going fast and finishing a race. Some severe track widening and pit-stop allocating later and *Destruction* has been transformed from a slow, frustrating smash-up to a no-holds barred fender-bending racer. David Cronenberg would love this game. It features sexy car crashes at every junction that are far more entertaining now that they extend into three dimensions so

that you can completely roll or flip your car end-over end. There are lots of steep ramps too sending you stupidly high into the air only to smash down the other side in true Bullitt fashion. Unlike the three other top racers featured here

Destruction Derby 2 positively encourages powersliding, letting you skid round corners like a rally car driver – an enjoyably different feeling to the turn-on-a-sixpence, grippy style of *Formula 1* and *Ridge Racer Revolution* or the swinging smoothness of *Wipeout 2097*. It may not be the fastest of our Essential selection but nevertheless it's fun and exhilarating the minute you hit the accelerator.



The tracks are less congested.



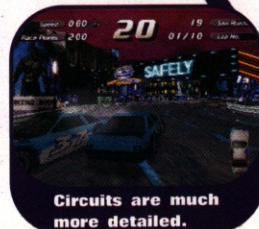
You can flip your car right over.



There are still lots of pile-ups.



Sparks fly with the improved FX.



Circuits are much more detailed.

SPEED:

Essential PlayStation

FORMULA 1

•RACING LINE

In most games taking the correct approach to a corner helps, in F1's Grand Prix mode it's essential. When cornering you should always keep to the dark grey line shown on the track, this gives the correct angle of approach.

•BRAKING

Unlike most other racers, braking as you turn is inviting a place-losing spin. Tap the brakes as you approach a corner (in a straight line) and then turn at this lower speed before whacking the power back on.

•DOWNFORCE

The set up you finish Qualifying with will carry-through into the race. Too much downforce and you'll be too slow on the straights, too little and you'll lose grip and have trouble cornering. Once you've had some practice on Medium you can afford to put less downforce on your car than the default. On faster circuits like Aida try very little downforce while at Monaco you'll need all you can get.

•VARIOUS CHEATS

Enter these cheats on the Race Qualifying screen:

Extra Track

Hold Select and quickly press Right, O, O, T, T, O, Up, Right

Lava Mode

Hold Select and quickly press S, O, Up, Right, Right, O, X

Gibberish Mode

Hold Select and quickly press Left, O, Up, Down, Down, Right, O, S, S

Bike Mode

Hold Select and quickly press Down, Up, O, T, Right, Up, S, T

Buggy Mode

Hold Select and quickly press Right, Up, T, Left, Up, S, T

DESTRUCTION DERBY 2

•LIMITING DAMAGE

When competing in the wrecking or total destruction events a handy tip is to turn your car round and reverse into opponents with the undamaged rear. In the bowl, let all the other cars rush into the middle and smash each other up at the start. It may sound cowardly but hiding behind other cars on around the edge is a good move. Watch for the white smoke that shows cars that haven't been finished off just yet (they often play dead).

•360° JUMPS

Although it is pretty tricky there are ramps in the game that allow you to do a full 360° roll and land the right way up.

•TRACK SELECT

Enter this as your name in championship mode then quit out and you'll be able to access all the tracks:

MACSPOO

•SPECIAL CREDITS

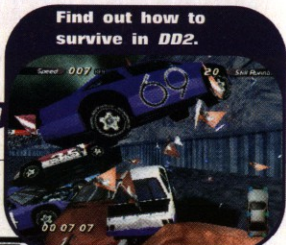
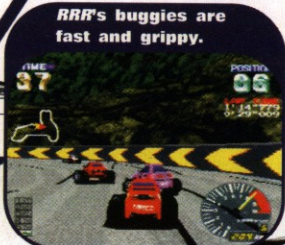
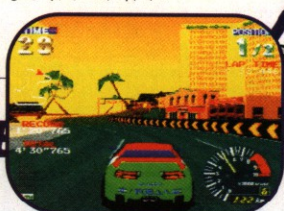
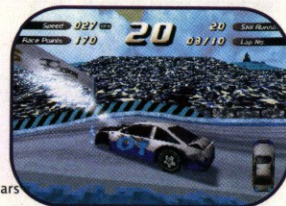
Enter as your name in championship mode:

Animated programmer credits

More impressive credits

CREDITZI

ToNyPaRk



WIPEDOUT 2097

•JUMPS

If you lose momentum into a jump by taking hits or scraping the side pull Down on the D-pad and you'll bring the nose of your craft up, creating more lift and making it more likely that you'll reach the other side. If you make the jump okay immediately push Up on the D-pad to make the nose dip as this will gain you extra speed.

•LAST LAP

While at other times having the right power-up is not essential on the last lap it can be very important. When leading into the last lap, odds are that on any but the lowest racing class you'll come under heavy fire. The trick is to keep a homing missile or turbo in reserve for the run-up to the finish line. Timed correctly, even if you get over-taken simply blast the cheeky sled in front out of the way, or turbo past to claim the chequered flag.

•AUTO PILOT

Advice: Do not use the Autopilot when approaching the pit lane, while it'll be great at other times here it'll force you to take a slow detour through this energy-boosting area, especially annoying when

it stops you from over-taking on the last lap. Doh!

•ANIMAL TEAMS

While the game loads hold L1 + R2 + Start + Select

The standard sleds become a bee, snail, UFO, pig and shark.

•PREGAME VARIOUS

Enter at the main menus.

Piranha Team

XXXXOTS

Phantom Class

TTTTOOO

Eight Tracks

SOTOS

IN-GAME VARIOUS

Pause during play and hit...

Machine Gun

S, O, X, S, O, X, T

Infinite Energy

T, X, S, O, T, X, S, O

Infinite Weapons

X, X, S, S, O, O, T

Infinite Time

T, S, O, X, T, S, O, X

RIDGE RACER REVOLUTION

•STARTING CAR

The best car to begin racing with is the green and red Rt Ryuku. While it doesn't have the best top speed it has the best handling and grip, allowing you to take corners very late without needing to brake or powerslide.

•POWER SLIDING

Basically a powerslide is just a controlled skid that you pull out of by hitting the accelerator at exactly the right moment. While it can be done with both the yellow and blue Solvalous it's advisable to wait until you've managed to get the Kid Devil. With its incredible acceleration and top speed and negligible grip this will give you hours of powersliding pleasure.

•EXTRA CARS

To get the eight extra cars you have to shoot all the aliens on the Galaga loading screen and waste at least one shot. Get a Turbo Laser by holding:

Down, T, Select, L1 and R1 together

•BUGGY MODE

To race with cute miniaturised versions of the RRR cars use the Turbo Laser cheat above to kill all the aliens without wasting a single shot. The buggies have great handling and grip and are easier to overtake.

•REVERSE TRACKS

There is an easy way of getting the reverse tracks without having to win every race. On the starting line simply turn the car around and head back towards the grey wall behind you. Go through it and you'll find yourself back on the starting line but racing on a mirror-image of the original track.

•SPINNING POINT MODE

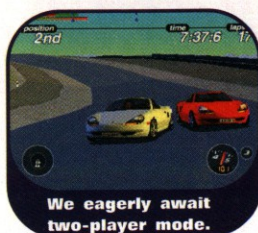
Select Time Attack on the menu, then press Start immediately followed by accelerate and brake together. If you've done it correctly the words 'Spinning Point Mode' will appear. Race as normal but when the spinning point message pops-up try a succession of powerslides. When you've finished a little car will roll across the screen scoring your performance.



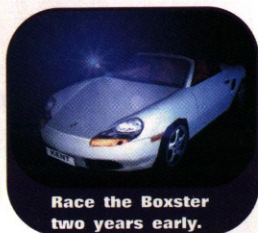
HIGHLIGHT

PORSCHE CHALLENGE

The major lure of *Porsche Challenge* has to be the opportunity to drive the Porsche Boxster two years before the first car rolls off the production line. Here Sony's software arm, SCEE have gone all-out for realism, doing a *Formula 1* by drawing on all the technical specs from the Porsche garage to provide a simulated drive of unparalleled authenticity. It doesn't hurt either that the rendered Boxster cars are almost painfully pretty. Fwooar factor apart, the split-screen two-player mode could be what elevates *Porsche Challenge* to true gaming quality. The PlayStation-controlled drivers will all have definite personalities attempting to block, driving erratically or aiming for a smooth, trouble-free race. If you so wish you'll be able to abuse these beautiful cars with handbrake turns and powerslides – although



We eagerly await two-player mode.



Race the Boxster two years early.

putting dents in them is out. The only question mark hangs over the quality of its tracks. There will be 25 tracks spread across six courses which should provide enough variety to avoid any of those tedious *Need for Speed* gently (yawn) arcing numbers. Narrow, slidey forest levels and plenty of tricky chicanes and short cuts please. Planned as a March release.

HIGHLIGHT

RAGE RACER

Going for a more realistic feel *Rage* is visually a marked departure from the bright, cartoony style of its predecessor, *Revolution*. All the usual Namco elements are here though including one course with many detours and hazards bolted-on, progressively faster difficulty levels, mirror tracks and a devil car. However, there are considerable differences and additions that set *Rage* apart. For a start the tracks are much hillier affairs with steep slopes to power up and fly down. The cars are altered too, sporting a more varied and realistic look with Porsche, Fiat and Ford influencing the designs. The greatest innovation of all is that new cars are gained through winning money rather than cheats or time trials. Nearly every car can be upgraded (for a fee) and will change in appearance as you bolt on a bigger engine, fit grippier wings and a sportier spoiler. Rather strangely the collisions have been tweaked back in line with *Ridge Racer*, so that any impact is likely to slow you down, ruling out a lot of *Revolution's* great blocking. Still, with fully customisable cars (right down to the logos), more complex tracks and even the Arc de Triomphe, *Rage* could be another Namco classic. Available from July.



Rage's tracks are much hillier.



Tune-up your car so it goes faster.

SPEED: 300MPH

SPEED: 162MPH



Challenge offers lots of short-cuts.



Try out Porsche's special test track.



You get 25 tracks to race around.

SPEED: 199MPH

SPEED: 139MPH

HIGHLIGHT

Micro Machines 3

The long-awaited 32-bit version of Codemaster's seminal miniature racer is finally just around the corner. Drive up spoons, tumble into snooker pockets and jump large bowls of breakfast cereal. Its rendered 3D graphics look smart, especially with the promise of the original addictive four-player Codies gameplay behind them. Planned for March.

Monster Trucks

Off-roading looks like being popular this year with this truck 'em up from Psygnosis joining Gremlin's *Hardcore 4X4* on the shelves from February. Going for the 'choose your own route' approach it has you trundling across a 3D landscape trying to make it past a number of checkpoints to claim victory. Can sheer power really win out over speed? We'll have to see.

Need for Speed 2

The original game had its faults, notably dull tracks and poor handling on the cars. It's hoped this will set the record straight in this realistic road racer. Available in March.

Road Rage

Although developed completely separately this has more than a hint of *Wipeout* about its futuristic craft and winding tracks. It's still too early to say whether it can really match the speed and class of the Psygnosis classic.

Rush Hour

Another two-player split screen racer, this time from an aerial perspective. Like a halfway house inbetween *Micro Machines* and *Ridge Racer* this offers a variety of city and countryside tracks for you to race each other round. Coming late Easter.

Twisted Metal 2

The most under-rated driving game of '95 gets a second chance in this rsequel. Choose from a variety of vehicles (from fast, lightly armoured bikes to a stonking great armoured car) and then duel it out through icy wastes and city streets. Not really a racing game, this should still be top automotive fun.

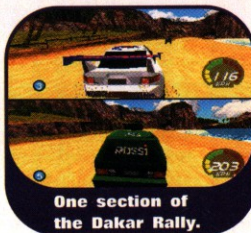
THE PACK

TOTAL DRIVIN'

The dark horse of the bunch has to be *Total Drivin'* from Merit Studios. It features a mix of road and off-road circuits designed to make you learn different racing techniques. In desert and wet, slippery conditions the chunky 4X4 cars gain a distinct



Can Total be the PS's Sega Rally?



One section of the Dakar Rally.

advantage, letting you powerslide and slip without coming a cropper. However, on the road circuits around Moscow or Honk Kong the faster but less grippy Porsches and Lamborghinis come into their own. Perhaps the greatest innovation is that this really is an all-terrain racer, giving you the chance to find your own route through the desert wastes or winding Alpine sections. If you feel so inclined you can even drive into the sea (just remember your rustguard). Like *Porsche Challenge* this has what could be 97's killer feature, a split screen two-player. The PlayStation's answer to *Sega Rally*? We'll have to wait until late this year to find out.

SPEED

Essential PlayStation



Blam-bomb-babe!

Ridiculous plot-lines are nothing new to videogames but *Blam!* is inspired in its perversity. A nerdy scientist, Callam, creates a nano-virus that takes over the world, mutating everything (plants, trees, animals, people) into hideously destructive organisms. Meanwhile, another scientist, the generously proportioned Dr Kimberley Stride, gets strapped to a flying bomb by her nerdy assistant Orville and sent out to deal with Callam AKA the newly evolved cyborg tyrant 'Machinehead'. Sexism, death and the revenge of the nerd all wrapped up in one blasting good package. Lurvely.



Blam! Machinehead

still hungry for action? Want a blast to really get your teeth into?

We might have something for you, but be careful, Blam! Machinehead bites back...



Spiders. Few creatures can be more universally hated. They have spindly, independently creepy-crawly legs, vicious fangs and more bug-eyes than a whole series of the X-Files. This is, of course, what makes them ideal material for that other hated species, the videogame nasty. While some blasters are content to save them up for special occasions (a boss in *Krazy Ivan*, the final level in *Doom*) *Blam! Machinehead* is replete with these arachnid monstrosities. Yet *Blam!* is a game of quality as well as quantity. Its spiders aren't just repulsive to look at, they behave horribly as well. Nip under a bridge and you'll suddenly find one crawling down a pylon leg to attack you, stray too close to the edge of a trench and two pink legs herald one's arrival over the top. The



[1] These mutant wasps are always in your face. **[2]** Clear the level by shooting the green cocoons. **[3]** A missile power-up.



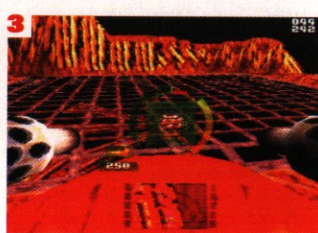
same irrepressible evil energy that possesses these creatures suffuses the rest of the game. There's a kind of malice at work behind the scenes here that keeps reminding you of *Doom*. Praise indeed. At first, moving about and firing is a chore. Pressing buttons to move forwards and backwards seems very odd and with look up and down on the D-pad for your first five minutes you'll spend a lot of time accidentally swivelling the view

skywards. What it does mean though is that, once you're facing the enemy, you can easily direct your fire in any direction – essential as enemies come at you from all angles. The semi-transparent head-up display that incorporates cross-hairs and an energy meter gets in the way at first although if you don't become accustomed to it you can turn it off. Energy, as you'll soon learn, is a precious commodity so it's probably best to be reminded of its status at all times.

Right from the outset you're expected to do rather more than just wander around shooting things. There are Reality Keys and cocoons



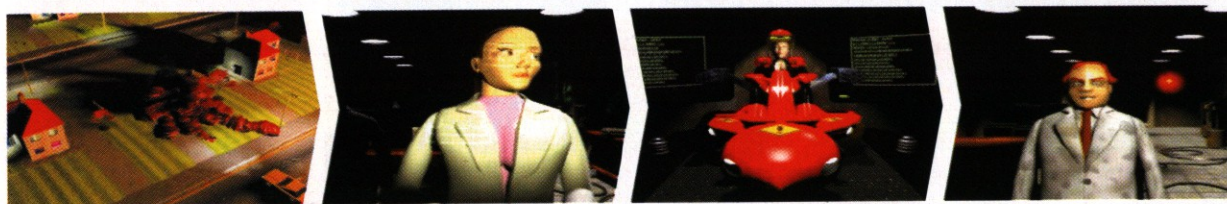
Dr Stride. You pilot her bizarre bomb/hovering scooter-chariot thing.



[1] Shooting too close to an ammo dump could have disastrous consequences. Obviously. **[2]** It's the intelligence of the enemies as much as the sheer number of them that makes *Blam!* such a tough blast. **[3]** The structures all have a peculiarly organic feel to them.



■ PUBLISHER: Core Design
 ■ STYLE: 3D Blaster
 ■ PRICE: £44.99



[1] Unusually, you wouldn't survive without extra weaponry. **[2]** These terminals open up new areas of the level. **[3]** Photon weapon. **[4]** Special effects. **[5]** Blam's full of vehicles, like this tanker. **[6]** Energy. **[7]** Pods. **[8]** Pay attention to the messages. **[9]** Two-on-one.



to find, trains to escort, satellites to reactivate. It's to the game's eternal credit that each task leads onto the next in a logical fashion. Know that big blank area of the map with gates in front of it? Well, wouldn't you know it, that's what you've got to eventually open up once you've dealt with all the enemy forces. The latter task is actually a lot tougher than you might imagine, *Doom*-style



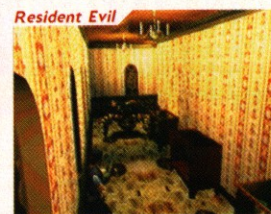
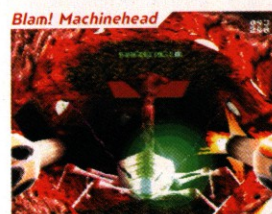
These chubby droids lurk in the funniest places. They're darn cunning like all Blam's nasties.

sidestepping is unlikely to help you much here as you get pinned down in trenches, bombed from above and leapt on from behind. Keeping moving is a must but so is disabling enemies quickly before they really start pounding you. It's certainly a challenge to remain cool under pressure as howitzers shell you from long range, spiders snap at your ankles and humanoids snipe at you round every corner. There are stationary hazards to avoid too, scorching flame and gas jets, mines and pulsating mutant flowers.

It's no exaggeration to say that *Blam!* is stuffed with surprises. Instead of just opening doors the Reality Keys you collect can change the whole environment, lowering small mountains, creating brand new roadways and ramps. From traversing a desert landscape suddenly you find yourself swimming in a sewer system, climb out and you discover that to reach other parts of the level you have to rev up and jump using ramps, Evel Kneivel-style. Meet-up with a huge devil's head sunk in the rock, begin blasting and, just when you're about to give up it explodes to reveal some vital power-ups. While the

Danger: Arachnids!

Blam! is one of those very special games that can actually make you jump. This is mainly due to the horrible spiders that, like *Alien Trilogy's* face-huggers, are forever running up your trouser leg to sink their fangs into your sensitive flesh. Still, at least they're not as big and hairy as *Resident Evil's* monster tarantulas. Urgh.





[1] These Reality Keys are what you use to activate the Reality Terminals. Match them up and whole areas of the landscape will fold away to give you access to new areas. **[2]** What the heck? Whatever it looks like you can be sure this structure serves some nefarious purpose. **[3]** This ghostly train is not yet more blast fodder, rather it's a vehicle you need to activate to travel deeper into Machinehead territory. **[4]** A mutant abduction. **[5]** Gun turrets can give you a real pounding, so you have to destroy them quickly.



Fail to complete your mission and Miz Stride is blown sky high.

tasks themselves unfold logically the game as a whole feels wonderfully organic. Yours is an on-going mission, so coming up against a 'level boss' in the form of an enormous, long-legged arachnid is actually quite a surprise – the 'levels' tend to merge so that the action is constantly evolving.

The downside is that *Blam!* isn't as instantly impressive as *Die Hard Trilogy* or *Tunnel B1*, it needs time to grow on you. Another possible stumbling block might be the difficulty level. The learning curve you have to follow is bewilderingly high at first, getting used to the controls, finding your way about and staying alive (and having to do it all at once) is a pretty tall order. The

relief map that obscures your view doesn't help much – although how you could show the contours on a transparent *Doom*-style map is unclear. Otherwise it's hard not to be sucked in by the sheer cleverness of *Blam! Machinehead*. You really do feel that there's an evil genius at work behind the scenes because the enemies and tasks are fashioned with such cunning. This is no quick blast, to get your money's worth from *Blam!* you'll have to be possessed of immense reserves of bloody-mindedness as well as a brain just as cold as calculating as your final adversary, the Machinehead. Yet this, you'll find, only makes your eventual victory sweeter.

Alternatively

Die Hard Trilogy

More instantly appealing, *Die Hard* allows you to put your brain in neutral and smash through its levels destroying everything in your path.

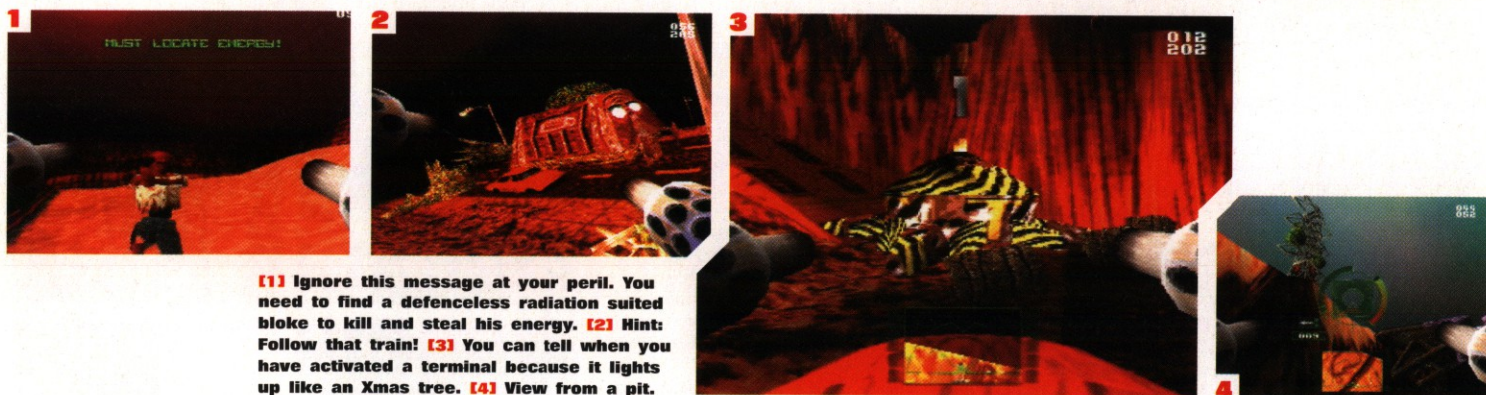
★★★★★



Tunnel B1

An altogether faster blaster that has you zipping around sewers. While not quite as mission-structured as *Blam!* it does harbour a strategic element.

★★★★



[1] Ignore this message at your peril. You need to find a defenceless radiation suited bloke to kill and steal his energy. **[2]** Hint: Follow that train! **[3]** You can tell when you have activated a terminal because it lights up like an Xmas tree. **[4]** View from a pit.

VERDICT

Essential PlayStation

■ GRAPHICS:

■ SOUND:

■ LIFESPAN:

Scarily real **8**

Menacing **7**

Long-term **8**

■ GAMEPLAY:

■ PRESENTATION:

■ ORIGINALITY:

Fiendish **8**

Rendered **8**

Odd flashes **7**

A challenging blaster that rewards extended play. Big AND clever.



Five Star Rating

TEMPEST

TM

X³



WARNING
ADDICTIVE GAMEPLAY

"One of the fastest, hardest, most intense and exciting games you'll ever play, whatever the format."

"It's arguably one of the best games ever created full stop."

Official
Playstation 9/10

"Thrilling!"

"I couldn't help but be dazzled. The new effects are mind blowing."

"Tempest X is an exceptional blaster. It's like a '96 dance remix of an old rave hardcore classic! I want it!"

C&VG 5/5

"This is a classic game that shows no sign of age, due in no small part to a fine conversion."

A renovated
Tempest returns to
the Hall of Fame"

"Players will be blown away by the visual elegance of Tempest"

Mean Machines
Sega 88%

(Tempest 2000)

"Stare fixedly at the screen, hold down the fire button and relive the old days... with added bosh and weird spinning colours!"

Play
86%

£34.99

OR LOWER
A STEAL!

Interplay



Tempest X3

While some games mature with age others just go off.

We discover the secret of one arcade classic's miraculous preservation...



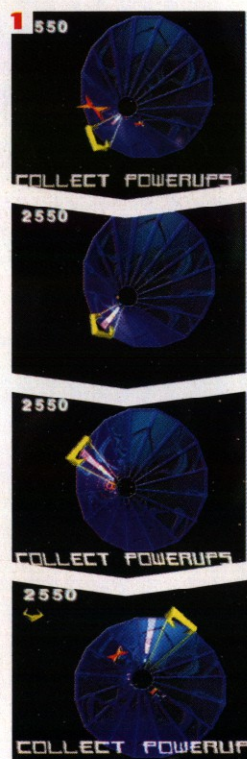
[1] You are the yellow coat-hanger (top, middle) skipping around this blue square. [2] Shoot enough nasties and power-ups appear. [3] If enemies make it through your hall of bullets it's your job to dodge around and waste them. [4] Two-player mode. [5] Weapons power-up. Nice.

Describing *Tempest's* appeal is difficult. At heart it's an incredibly basic affair, the prototype of the modern 3D shoot 'em up. You control a craft that spins around a number of line-drawn webs shooting things that tumble 'out of the screen' towards you. Somewhere along the line though, like all classic games, *Tempest* works its magic, drawing you into its world and keeping your hands glued to the joypad. The shame is that some will

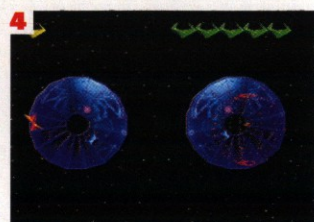
be put off by its decidedly primitive graphics. Going completely against the trend for realism, *Tempest X3* is a game stripped down to the bare essentials. Once you begin to play the reasons for this minimalist approach soon become clear. Speed is one objective, the other is to throw as many enemies your way as possible. It's this fast and furious pace that makes *Tempest X3* an incredibly addictive arcade experience.

At first you're likely to wonder what all the fuss is about. Charlatans who have dim memories of it in the arcades will start spinning round the web with the fire button depressed, writing it off as far too easy. Yet while this will see you safely through the first few levels these are

merely a warm-up for what is to come – the ambient bit before the thudding techno storm arrives. And arrive it most certainly does as the lanes of each web become stuffed with increasing numbers of nasties, evil things that when shot give birth to more evil things, things that grab onto the edge of the web and roll round to capture you and drag you down into electric oblivion. The contours of the webs themselves change, turning into sinewy facsimiles of sine and cosine waves, forcing you to clear lanes while swinging about upside down like some demented fruitbat. As you get sucked further into this neon nightmare you'll begin to realise that *Tempest X3* challenges more than just your reactions. You'll get stuck for ages on some levels only to find the next couple dead easy. Imagine trying to cross the road with one eye closed or, if you



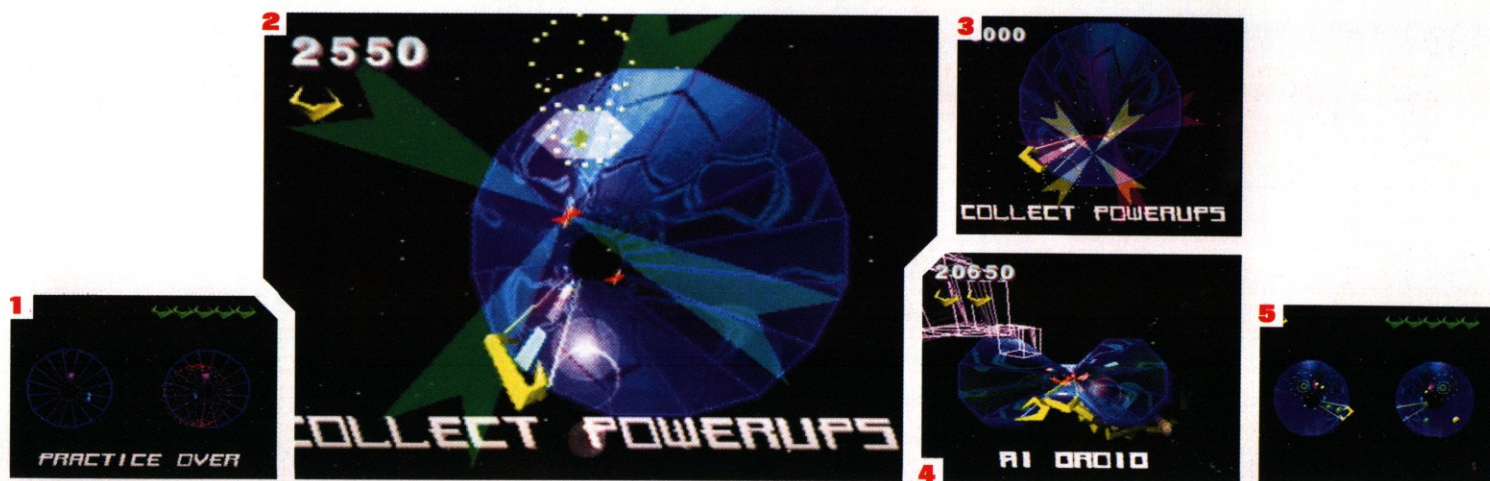
Yes indeed, get enough kills and you gain an extra life. You'll need this when the nasties start lobbing bullets right back at you.



[1] Rather like the equally classic *Missile Command*, *Tempest* is all about prioritisation. Which enemies will reach you first? It's up to you to anticipate and gun them down. [2] After clearing a level you get whipped forward through hyperspace. Engage! [3] This green cuboid is a mirror drone that moves and blasts as you do. [4] The two-player can get confusing. Good option though.



PUBLISHER: Interplay
 STYLE: Shoot 'em up
 PRICE: £44.99



[1] Practice is all very well but you want to play against a cunning human opponent. [2] Original *Tempest* lacked any of these flashy effects and was completely line drawn (even the coat-hanger wasn't solid). [3] Circular webs like these are easy because you can spin all the way round. Later on you get figures of eight and curved planes that are much more difficult. [4] The super-zapper is probably more useful as it clears all the cling-ons lurking around the edge of the web. [5] Mr Person on the Right still has five lives while Mr Left is sadly depleted. Avoiding unnecessary death is the key to success.

prefer, after several pints. Suddenly your depth-perception can't help you and you have to strain to work out which cars are closer to you, which are going death-defyingly fast and which are slowing down. Now multiply this by a factor of 16 (the number of lanes in each web) and

imagine that you have to dodge this traffic head-on. Brain hurting yet? Well when you have to do this in *Tempest* it certainly will. Put simply, some webs are very hard indeed to get your head round. You'll squint, you'll strain, you'll almost certainly die (in the game) before your mind

can adjust to this new geometric mutation. Some you'll come back to again and again (thankfully you can skip through the levels) while others are over in a flash.

Tempest is one of those rare games that, like *Wipeout 2097*, *Bust A Move 2* and *Aquanaut's Holiday* really does alter your state of mind. If escaping from reality is your main priority then *Tempest X3* could, quite literally, entrance you. Born trippy.



[1] Shoot some nasties and they disgorge more enemies to haunt your waking hours. [2] Holding out for the particle laser is a good idea as this is much more effective. [3] Jump allows you to (gasp) jump over the cling-ons loitering around the edge of your web. [4] Early on you will see a lot of this as *Tempest's* learning curve is steep. [5] Loads of points but just making it through to the next stage is the challenge of *Tempest X3*.

VERDICT

Essential
 PlayStation

GRAPHICS:
 SOUND:
 LIFESPAN:

Puritan 7 GAMEPLAY:
 Nostalgic 6 PRESENTATION:
 Ageless 9 ORIGINALITY:

Mind-bending 8
 Techno 8
 Still different 6

Tron meets *Fantastic Voyage*. A super-fast, totally unreal arcade blast from the past.



Five Star Rating

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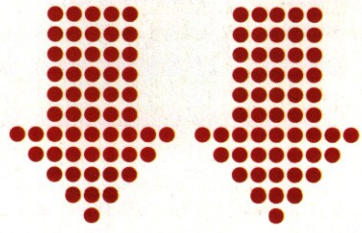
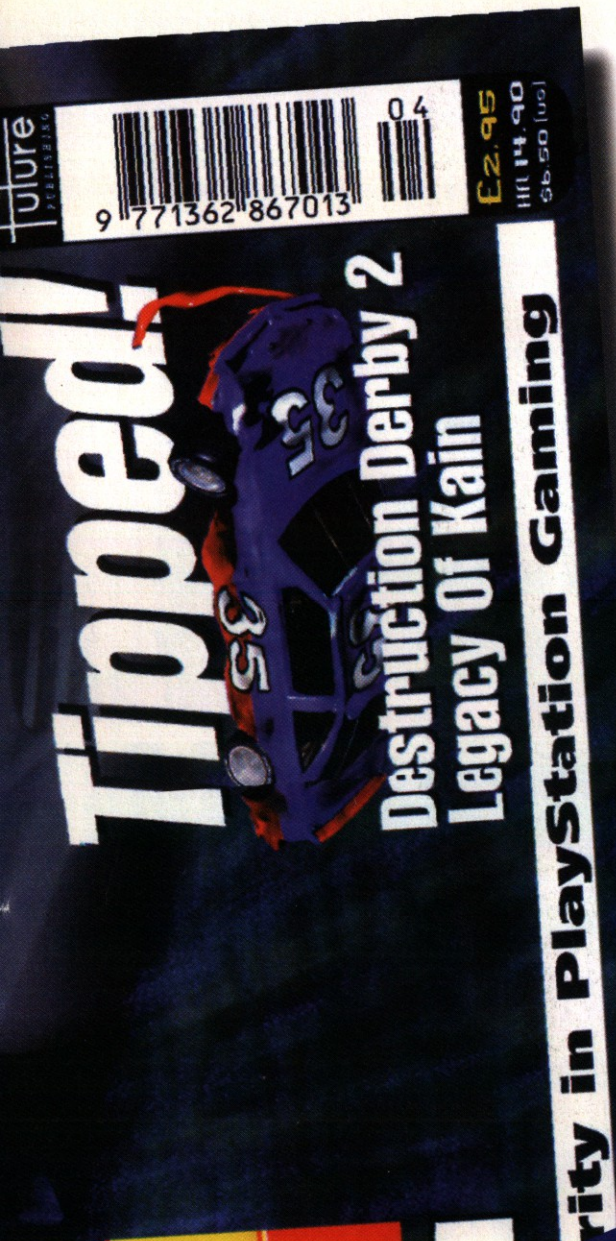


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ON SALE THURS 3RD APRIL

Broken Sword

Are adventures just for people in pointy hats and PC-heads?

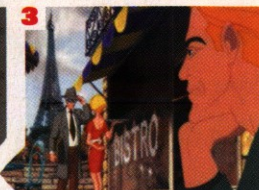
Essential rummaged through its inventory and examined the latest icon-monger...

It may be called *Broken Sword* but the vital question here has to be will you have a broken head after playing it? The answer is; quite possibly.

The script writers on *Broken Sword* have worked their fingers to the bone concocting a plot full of intrigue, glamorous locations and interesting characters. And the CD medium has given them the space to cram their every whim into the game. The result is that *Broken Sword* is weighed down with unnecessary dialogue-based baggage and a rather lumpy history lesson to boot. The plot concerns one George Stobbard who, while enjoying a doubtlessly over-priced thimble of coffee at a street-side Parisian cafe, is nearly killed in an explosion, the bomb responsible being planted by a beaming clown who swiftly disappears. This strange occurrence



[1] Spooky eh? **[2]** There are hundreds of lovely backdrops. **[3]** Ah, Paris in the springtime. **[4]** George is often stupidly tiny during play. **[5]** That clown's up to no good. **[6]** You can use this convenient telephone to question characters remotely.



[1] Question all the characters carefully. **[2]** Animations punctuate the action. **[3]** That's you, on the right. **[4]** Little does he know, that's a bomb. **[5]** 'Ere, what's your game? **[6]** Down in the creepy catacombs.

eventually leads our George to the spooky (and historically accurate) world of the Knights Templar, a group of warrior monks who, after the fall of the Holy Lands in 1291 returned to France with a fortune and (some say) the Holy Grail.

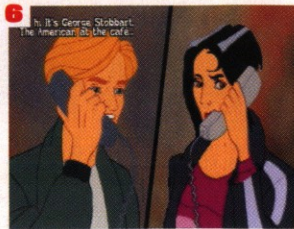
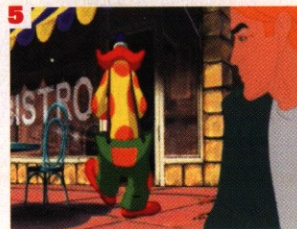
We must steer George through to the game's conclusion, some 100 hours of gameplay later, and it is George's wit and wisdom we must suffer throughout. The problem with this is that George is not a likeable character. The net result being that,

rather like Tom Cruise in *Cocktail*, rather than rooting for our hero you find yourself wishing that the whining git would cop it at the earliest opportunity.

Dialogue and plot aside, what *Broken Sword* does it does very well. The graphics used to describe the action are bright, colourful and very cartoon-like. The dialogue is at least well recorded and clear and the interface used is - in theory - simple to understand and easy to use. Playing the game involves

Icons 'R' us

The game is played via icons which appear in the borders at the top and bottom of the screen. Objects in your inventory appear at the top and topics of conversation, be they places, other objects or characters in the game, appear at the bottom. Click on an icon to ask a character a question concerning that item. If you're lucky you might find out a vital bit of information, adding another icon to your collection and allowing you to continue your questioning.

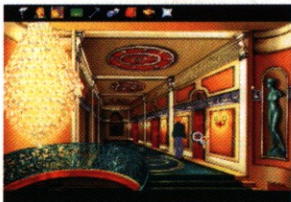




PUBLISHER: SCE
 STYLE: Adventure
 PRICE: £44.99

Right up your alley

Broken Sword is split into 'Acts' each of which takes place in a different part of the world. Each act features tasks that must be accomplished to continue, like this little conundrum for example. After successfully extracting the document from the safe how do you get it out of the hotel and past the bad guys on the door? Simple, you climb out of a first floor window and drop it into the alley below. Now you can be frisked by the bad guys on your way out and nip round the back to retrieve your booty. It's easy when you know how.



[1] Another character - another torrent of boring dialogue. No hum.
[2] The workman is hiding a useful tool in his lunchbox. **[3]** Use the question icons at the top and bottom of the screen to grill suspects.
[4] Scanning the screen for removable items can be a chore. **[5]** More telephonic happenings. **[6]** There's the clown! Quick, after him!



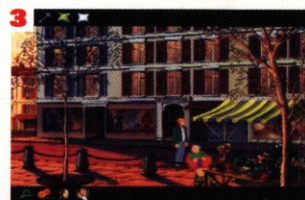
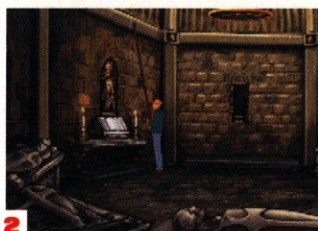
manoeuvring a pointer around the screen and 'clicking' on interesting looking objects or people to allow George to interact with them in some way. However, under joypad control this pointer moves stupidly slowly meaning that thought and action are often an irritating five or so seconds apart. This then becomes

ten seconds as the game takes a baffling amount of time to respond, whether it be moving George or finding and playing the correct piece of dialogue. When everything you do is hampered by such delays merely walking across the room and speaking to somebody feels like an achievement. Things are improved with the mouse, but even this is inexplicably juddery, making accurate location of on-screen items a rather hit and miss affair.

And then we get into the actual mechanics of the game. Speaking with a character earns you icons at the top and bottom of the screen representing knowledge gleaned. Show the doorman the piece of cloth (by clicking on it, then clicking



[1] Yet another course of questioning ends in a dead end.
[2] The objects in each scene tend to blend in a little too well with the backgrounds. Best keep your eyes peeled.



on the doorman) and he'll tell you about the costumier. Suddenly you have a costumier icon with which you can grill other characters. And so it goes on. And on. And on. What seems like genuine interaction quickly degenerates into ceaseless trekking back and forth trying out each new piece of information on each character. This is no way to play a game. Sometimes you get lucky, the plot pulls you in the correct direction, information leads you to new locations and characters. At other times though failure to ask every character every question leaves you completely stumped.

It's a shame really, as the game is punctuated by odd flashes of brilliance and the satisfaction gained from finally overcoming an obstacle can make you forget about the cursing and hair tearing that has gone before. It's certainly less than perfect but the sheer size of the game, and the admittedly intriguing plot, is likely to keep you plugging away despite its obvious shortcomings.

Tips

Down the pub

Stuck in that pesky pub in Ireland? The trick here is to speak to Ron the poacher to the far left. Wait until he leaves a snare on the table, then take the snare when he sneezes - you have to be quick. When Fitzgerald gets hit by a car go outside and turn off the beer pumps by throwing the exposed switch beside the pub door then return to the bar and ask for a drink. Show Leary the ID card then use the snare on the glass washer plug and go to the cellar and undo the bolt holding the trap door. Go back to the street and open the trap door then return to the cellar and collect the gem. That should sort you out.



The cartoon intro sets the scene for the superb animation throughout Broken.

Essential
PlayStation

VERDICT

GRAPHICS: Cool and colourful 8
 SOUND: Orchestra and dialogue 7
 LIFESPAN: Long and lasting 9
 GAMEPLAY: A little fiddly 6
 PRESENTATION: Neat enough 7
 ORIGINALITY: No surprises 7

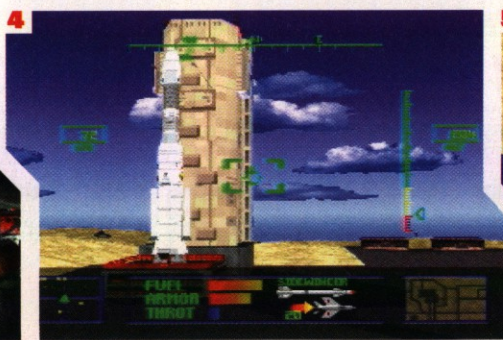
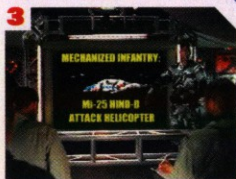
Good-looking but often fiddly point 'n' click yarn. Rewarding only if you persevere.





PUBLISHER: Virgin
 STYLE: Shoot 'em up
 PRICE: £44.99

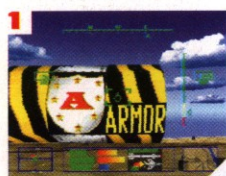
[1] Pay attention in the briefing room as you'll be shown your primary and secondary objectives. **[2]** So you know you should be attacking this base. **[3]** Save your sidewinders for the air escort like these choppers. **[4]** Stop that rocket! It's your job to see that the enemy are grounded. **[5]** The flat desert backdrop makes it easier to spot ground targets.



Agile Warrior

If you've seen *Top Gun* then you might assume a pilot's life is full of aerobatic sex and steamy barrel rolls. Not if you fly an F-111X Agile Warrior it isn't...

When *Agile* first came out in 1995 many reviewers mis-diagnosed it as an air combat simmy thing. It isn't. As symptoms like its large explosions and floating clouds of power-ups reveal, it is quite definitely a shoot 'em up. That said you can understand the initial confusion as *Agile*, rather like *Tunnel B1*, is that rare thing; a shoot 'em up with strategic depth. Going full-on gung-ho into its later missions is a sure invitation to crash and burn. Instead, what's required here is some additional cunning. Your aircraft (the



[1] Shoot armoured vehicles and - hey presto! - armour bonuses appear. **[2]** The 8.32 to Paddington. Blow it up.



[1] Homing in on the enemy base. **[2]** Even these helicopters aren't a push-over. Your best bet is to take them out with your missiles.

'Warrior' of the title) has two important resources; armour and fuel. If either of these run-out then you die. It sounds pretty harsh and indeed it is as you get shot at from all quarters. Fortunately, both can be replenished by the power-ups that appear after a bit of successful blasting. But - you cry - these are bound to be random so that just when you need armour it gives you bombs or something. Au contraire, each enemy target serves up a specific menu of power-ups so that if you're, say, low on fuel you need to find a fuel silo to blow up, or if you're short of armour better get strafing a few armoured cars. This kind of tactical planning is essential if you're to survive long enough to carry out your strategic objectives, conveniently signposted both on

your scanner and on your map. To get anywhere in *Agile Warrior* you'll need, above all, bloody-minded persistence. This is because initially you'll get a good pasting from the enemy until you learn to read the map properly, use the right weapons on the right targets and keep a constant eye on your plane's armour and fuel bars. It's a shame that this baptism of fire will put many players off because once you get into it *Agile* is rewarding and enjoyable. Complete one of the ten missions and you really feel like you've achieved something, a victory against all the odds. You'll be proud to save your progress onto your memory card. Those after a quick blast should look elsewhere, *Agile*'s attraction certainly doesn't reside in its dodgy graphics but rather in the cunning construction of its missions.

Tips

Various Cheats

Pause the game and press the required sequence of buttons to get the desired effect:

Key:



Invincibility

Left, S, S, S, S, Up, X, T, T, Right, O, Down, X, T, T, T, S
 Max Fuel+Armour
 Left, S, S, S, S, Up, T, T, T, Right, O, Down, X, T, T, T, O
 Max Weapons
 Left, S, S, S, S, Up, T, T, T, Right, O, Down, X, R1 (X4), L1 (X4), R2 (X4), L2 (X4)

VERDICT

Essential PlayStation

GRAPHICS:

SOUND:

LIFESPAN:

Pixellated 5 GAMEPLAY:

Functional 5 PRESENTATION:

Her-uge 9 ORIGINALITY:

Tactical 8

Sloppy 5

Genre-mixer 6

While it may be too tough for some *Agile* provides an absorbing and intelligent blast.



Five Star Rating



PUBLISHER: Fun Soft
 STYLE: Arcade racing
 PRICE: £44.99

Burning Road

Burning rubber maybe, but a whole road?

Essential tests the racer that wants to slide its way to the finish...

Powersliding is by far the hardest feature of arcade racing games to replicate on a home console. For a start you haven't got a wheel to grapple with as you turn into a skid. For another thing you haven't got pedals to stamp on. Even if you did have these accessories it's very difficult indeed to get the feel of gaining and losing grip right. The surprising thing is that *Burning Road* manages to accomplish this impressive feat yet fails to recreate the basic elements of a good racer. In still shots *Burning* is pleasing to the eye but what you can't see is both the way that distant scenery 'pops-up' from nowhere and the problems caused by such a low behind-the-car view. This view is great for gazing up



[1] The opposition huddle together in one big lump giving you no sense of duelling with specific cars. **[2]** All the cars look a bit deformed. **[3]** It's still slippery in the dry. **[4]** Mud, glorious mud.

your own exhaust pipe but useless for seeing the track ahead. You'll soon ditch this perspective in favour of the furthest in-car view. You could forgive these imperfections if the structure of the game itself was strong enough to keep you racing but, sadly, *Burning* is far too superficial. In any racing game being able to keep up a fair whack of speed is an essential part of the attraction but here the pandering to

slipperiness and a penchant for vicious corners means that even for experienced racers a smooth, fast drive is out of the question. You have to powerslide so often that you don't have the time or the length of straight to really gun your engine. Just as serious is the way that your opponents huddle together in one big clump. There's no sense of working your way up through the pack, it's all or nothing, which gives you the feeling that you've won more by luck than judgement and deflates any sense of pride in your achievement. Despite its good looks *Burning Road* is nowhere near fast or clever enough to beat the opposition.



It's far too easy to skid and crash out.



Slow but grippy or fast and slippery, the decision is yours.



[1] Sudden downpours can cause you to slide in the city. **[2]** Replaying the race. **[3]** The obligatory tunnel bit. **[4]** On all the cars the cornering feels rather wooly. **[5]** Can't see a thing. **[6]** A powerslide. **[7]** From the side. **[8]** Those are just sad.

VERDICT

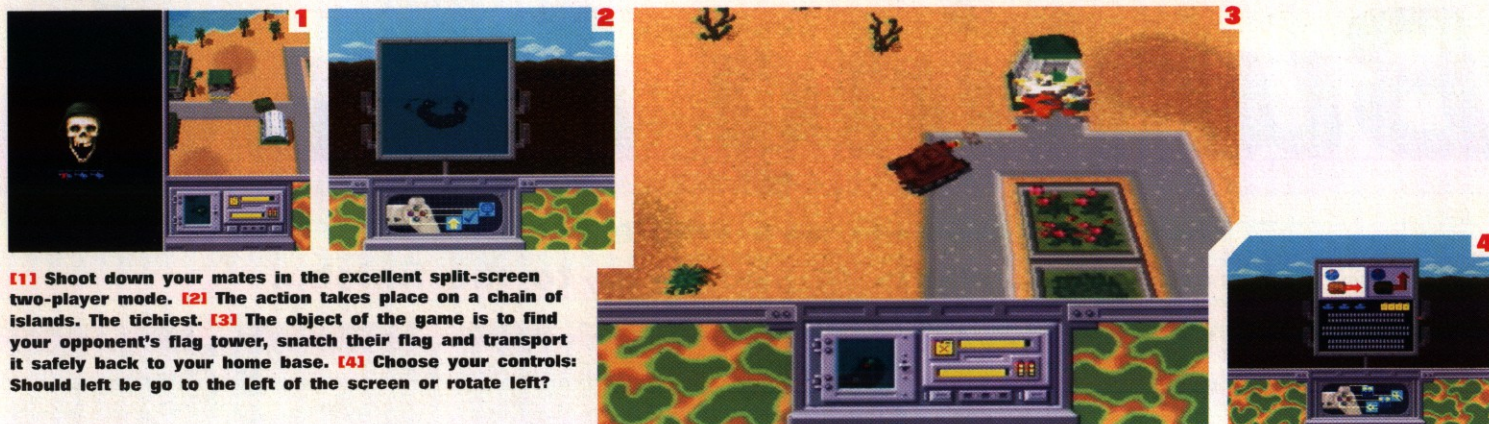
Essential PlayStation

GRAPHICS: Pretty but dodgy 7
 SOUND: Naff 5
 LIFESPAN: Is that it? 4

GAMEPLAY: Just sliding 6
 PRESENTATION: Jap nonsense 3
 ORIGINALITY: Stop thief! 2

It may look the biz but *Burning Road* is shamefully lacking in depth and polish.





[1] Shoot down your mates in the excellent split-screen two-player mode. **[2]** The action takes place on a chain of islands. The ticiest. **[3]** The object of the game is to find your opponent's flag tower, snatch their flag and transport it safely back to your home base. **[4]** Choose your controls: Should left be go to the left of the screen or rotate left?

Return Fire

Long before **split-screen racers** were all the rage one **blaster** proved that **dividing your screen** in half really did **double the fun**.

Essential tracked it down...

Apocalypse Now is a great film packed with great moments but surely the best bit has to be when the choppers swoop in to attack pounding out Wagner's Ride of The Valkyries. (Da-dada-daaa da, da-dada-daaa da). Yet not only does *Return Fire* steal this tune but it also takes that goosebumpy, 'we're about to make you eat rockets' feel

with it as well. What makes all this unusual is that, despite its arcade-style effects, *Return Fire* requires you to use your head just as much as your trigger-thumb.

The idea is simple, each player has a base somewhere on a chain of verdant atolls. Your mission is to find the other player's base, demolish their flag tower and trundle all the way back to your camp with their captured flag. To achieve this objective you have four vehicles to command; a jeep, helicopter, APC and tank. While the jeep and helicopter are good for reconnaissance work the tank and APC are ideal for taking out walls, guard towers and any of the other automated obstacles that lie between you and the enemy base. The landscape is presented in a pseudo 3D perspective, seen from above and slightly below. You can choose either to rotate your vehicle left and right with the D-pad or turn in that direction on-screen. Initially, controlling the vehicles can be

[1] While the jeep is amphibious the tank floats like a lead brick. **[2]** The chopper is top for reconnaissance but lacks decent armour. **[3]** Soften up the enemy defences before you send in your tanks.



[1] For fire-power you can't beat the rocket launcher. **[2]** Baseball victory bit. **[3]** Quiet, too quiet...



rather tricky, you'll get stuck behind the odd bush or tree, but with practice you will zoom about, banking from side to side in the helicopter or swivelling the tank's turret round while rumbling across the bumpiest of terrain.

If you were able to explore at your own pace, gradually sneaking up on the enemy camp then you might get bored with the simple, arcade gameplay. While this can happen in one-player with a human opponent you never get the chance to sit-back because you know (you can see!) that just as surely as you're searching for their camp, your opponent is gunning for yours. What



PUBLISHER: Time Warner Interactive

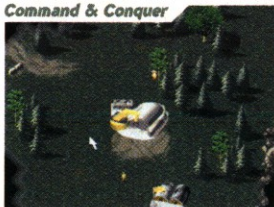
STYLE: Strategic shoot 'em up

PRICE: £44.99

Strategy, what strategy?

Despite its arcade demeanour *Return Fire* really does make you think strategically, especially when playing against a dastardly human opponent. Some players will attempt an all-out attack while others will be sneakier, using the individual strengths of each vehicle to out-manoeuvre or ambush your forces and grab your flag while you're not looking. It's not quite as thought-provoking as, say, *Command & Conquer* but the split-screen mode makes for an excellent battle of wits, nerve and manic blasting. It really is tops.

Command & Conquer



Return Fire



evolves is a frantic race-cum-battle in which there are no end of dirty tactics you can employ to achieve your goal. You can use your jeep with its inflatable tyres to sneak across a stretch of water and pop-up behind enemy lines. You can blow-up bridges, lurk behind buildings and generally ambush your opponent at every opportunity. Alternatively you can take your jeep on a mad dash down the open road hoping to outrun any forces you encounter. The strategic element is that, however gung-ho you get, you only have limited resources. Trash your three tanks and suddenly your options are limited, with only the APC being able to withstand heavy fire. Crash all your 'copters, on the other hand, and you'll have a hard time locating the enemy base without a speedy vehicle to reconnoitre with. Fuel and ammo are



[1] Squishing the enemy soldiers in their tents. It may not be fair, but it's war. [2] Beware of subs when taking to the sea. [3] My Little Bunker™. [4] Hiding in this car park won't win the war. [5] Base sweet base.

also in short supply, and getting caught without either signals the end for one of your precious units – was it a worthwhile sacrifice? It's up to you to decide. Inevitably, as we've touched on earlier, the one-player mode is nothing like as entertaining as a good two-player battle. If you want long-lasting one-player strategic blasting then *Tunnel B1* or *Command & Conquer* would be a better bet.

The brutal simplicity of *Return Fire*, that makes lone play repetitive, is its real strength with two. Seeing your mate obliterated in a cloud of gaudy red and yellow pixels is supremely satisfying, as is speeding away from the rubble of his/her guard tower with the enemy flag billowing to the strains of the William Tell Overture. So blow off those cobwebs and enjoy a truly classic shooting match. After all this time you still can't beat the smell of victory.



Alternatively

Twisted Metal

Much easier than *Return Fire* on one-player this provides a similarly absorbing two-player game. Drive through the streets strafing your mates and smashing up the gaff. A faster and flashier but not a smarter blast.

★★★



Tanks: A bunch

Yes it's time once again to celebrate these wondrous war machines that seem to regularly feature in blasting videogames. There were the 'rig' tanks of *Assault Rigs*, the LARGE tanks of *Shellshock* and now we have the small but perfectly formed tanks of *Return Fire*. What makes *Return*'s tanks special? Well, an independent turret that revolves on the shoulder buttons for one thing, for another the ability to shell both high and low to catch out enemy choppers and units cowering behind walls. Top tanks indeed.

Assault Rigs



Shellshock



On one-player mode the island lay-outs gradually increase in complexity. The enemy defences get more and more numerous. Later on whole swarms of helicopters will slow your progress.

VERDICT

GRAPHICS:

SOUND:

LIFESPAN:

Old arcade 6 GAMEPLAY:

Stirring 9 PRESENTATION:

Great with two 8 ORIGINALITY:

Relentless 7

Plain 5

Copycat 4

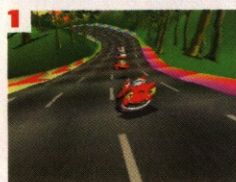
One of the best two-player blasts you can have. Enjoyably brutal and very challenging.



Five Star Rating

Essential PlayStation

[1] *Motor Toon's* cartoon style is a stark contrast to the realistic look of most racers. **[2]** The colour scheme gets confusing. **[3]** The funhouse is full of obstacles. **[4]** Replay. **[5]** A car leaning. **[6]** Vroom!



Motor Toon GP2

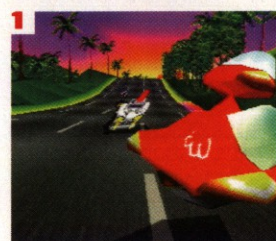
Hang on, what happened to the first one?

Ah, not released in this country.

So what makes numero two worth a look then?



When you think about Japanese animation you usually conjure up an image of a killer cyborg menacing some Jap schoolgirl with hardly any clothes on. But there is a nicer and altogether more family-friendly style of Oriental animation known as anime in which the people, the cyborgs and (yes) even the cars, are cute enough to give the cast of *Friends* a run for their money. It's this cartoon style that first attracts you to *Motor Toon GP2*. The cars are curvaceous and wobbly. The tracks are light-sourced and gorgeous and the inbetween sequences are suitably flash and rendered. In terms of presentation then *Motor Toon* is right up there with the *Wipeouts* of this world. Just watching the little cars bomb around the track is good fun as they mount bridges, screech round corners or topple off rail-less overpasses to a smoky end. The artistically inclined among you won't fail to notice the amazing work done with colour and lighting effects. It's as if Salvador Dali, Vincent Van Gogh and the bloke who dreamt up that big glass thing for the BBC news took a break from their crayoning to come up with something really mad for Jap developers POLY's. All this attention to the visual side of the game pays off as, at first, second and even third glance *Motor Toon*



[1] Some of *Toon's* cars float. **[2]** While others skid like stock cars. **[3]** Remember Wacky Races? *Toon* is pretty close.

remains eminently loveable.

Yet if to gaze upon, *Motor Toon* is a moving work of art, playing the game is more like missing a junction in *Ridge Racer* and finding that you've taken a detour into a

Racing ghosts

The best feature of *Motor Toon* has to be its ghost mode, that allows you to race against a see-through version of the car that set the best race time. This ghost car follows the exact same route around the track that the fastest racer took. Although it doesn't compensate for the lack of a two-player it does make for hours of time trial-type fun.



Do a lap and then get your mates to chase your ghost.



[1] The computer generated intro. **[2]** Even when you crash the effects are silly. **[3]** This bike is very nippy.



PUBLISHER:

SCE

STYLE:

Arcade racing

PRICE:

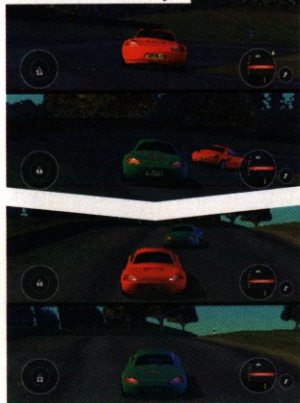
£44.99

Split decision

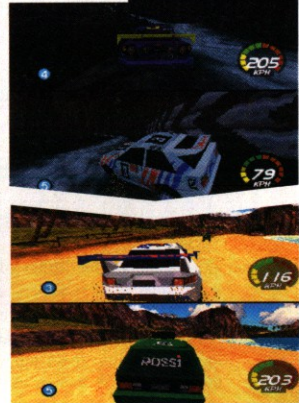
While weighing up which racer to buy it's worth considering that 1997 could be THE year of the split-screen racing game. *Porsche Challenge*, *Total Drivin'*, *Twisted Metal 2* and *Need for Speed 2* will all provide a real two-player racing game, allowing you to drive against a mate with just your TV,

PlayStation and copy of the game (although you will need a second joypad). The extended lifespan this two-player option ensures could give these split-screen racers the edge over the chasing pack. That said, *Motor Toon's* ghost mode and sub-games do make up for its one-playerness to some extent.

Porsche Challenge



Total Drivin'



Twisted Metal 2



Need for Speed 2



Japanese version of Wacky Races. The cars don't so much speed as chug around the tracks, you seem to take every corner teetering on two wheels and it would be no surprise at all if the car in front sprouted wings and proceeded to overtake you disguised as a thunder cloud. While there isn't a power-up to do exactly that, collect enough coins and you can activate turbos to speed you up or rockets to slow the other racers down. The shame is that these capabilities are randomized (a fruit machine wheel spins to select the effect) precluding any of the power-up selection strategy found in *Wipeout*.

It is at about this point that some of the game's initial charm will



begin to wear thin. You suddenly realise that, no, it isn't just you being ham-fisted with the joypad, you really can't take corners at that speed. Powersliding for one thing is definitely out, as is the precision cornering of *Formula 1*. A heavy thumb on the brake is what's called for, before you yank the D-pad round in the right direction and get moving again – not exactly the most genteel way to travel. For this reason the more OTT circuits can end up being damn annoying – you can't seem to stop hitting the walls of the funhouse as you try to



[1] Because of the way the cars handle, it's all too easy to over-steer and end up in the barriers. **[2]** Putting the PS's transparency effects to good use is this see-through roadway. Zooming out helps you take the corners earlier.

negotiate its sharp turns. Just as well then that there are wider circuits to traverse where you don't have to worry so much about your comical skidding and can still burn round the corners without having to slow to a crawl.

The biggest black mark against *Motor Toon* though has to be its lack of a split-screen or multi-player option. Many of the deficiencies that count against it (simplistic handling, accident-prone courses) would almost be turned into



[1] This city track is one of the best as it's got some high-speed straights. **[2]** BR doesn't have one of these. **[3]** Considering the detail everything moves at a scorching pace. **[4]** Eye, eye.

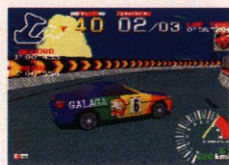


Alternatively

Ridge Racer Revolution

If you're after a much more serious but still cartoony racer then *Revolution* leads the way. Its bright colourful cars, day & night effects and cunningly detailed tracks are fun to look at but seriously tough to race.

★★★★★



[1] The train is fast but steers like a cow. **[2]** An explosive cutscene. **[3]** Getting stuck behind one of these chess pieces is not a good idea. **[4]** Cute characters are part of *Toon's* superficial appeal.

plus points if we were talking about a multi-player racer in the same vein as *Micro Machines 3* or *Supersonic Racers*. No doubt the same quality of graphics might be hard to achieve with a split-screen mode but you have to think that, with so many proper two-player racers coming out in '97, the link-up mode isn't much of a bonus.

Race over then? Time to send the cutesy cars away weeping oil and dragging their headlamps all the way to the city dump? Well no, put

down that Kleenex because *Motor Toon GP2* does indeed, have that little bit more to offer that makes it worth further attention. For starters *Motor Toon* has one great feature that its current rivals should have but sadly lack, a ghost mode. This is a cunning device of incredible simplicity that nevertheless expands the lifespan of any game immeasurably. Each time you play the game records your race, how you took the corners, how you bombed down the straights and with what panache you crossed the finish line. Race faster than the current track record and your victorious laps overwrite the memory of the previous fastest race, fail to beat the time and the older data remains intact. When you come to race again this data is transformed into a semi-transparent 'ghost car' that follows the exact same route you took on your fastest race. In practice this means that not only can you race against yourself, but

you can then challenge other players to race against your spooky alter-ego, swapping back and forth in a bid to notch-up ever-faster times.

But there's more, there are also three secret sub games to discover; one in which your car is armed and takes on an opponent in a tank duel, a quite bizarre Battleship-style grid-guessing game and a time trial in a *Daytona*-style stock car. Add to this access to hidden cars and extra tracks and *Motor Toon* suddenly seems like much better value.

Motor Toon GP2 will never catch up with the *Ridge Racers* and *Wipeouts* but it does offer a worthwhile alternative for those who are less serious about their racing. Like *Twisted Metal* the emphasis here is on fun and, like *Twisted*, any attempt to deliver gut-wrenching high-speed thrills is relegated to second place.



Autoerotic

Motor Toon GP2's cute-looking cars stem from the Japanese obsession with animism, the belief that inanimate objects like automobiles have souls like people and animals do (allegedly). To reflect this, Japanese car designers have always favoured giving cars human characteristics, so that radiator grills are curved into a smile and headlamps are shaped into curvy eye-like shapes. Hence the wackiest cars of any racing game:



Tips

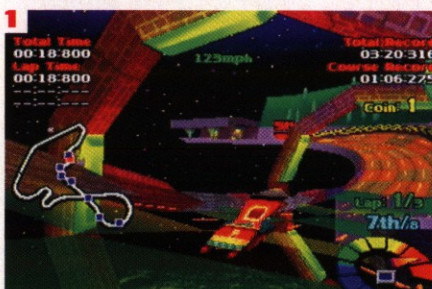
Various

Go to the Goodies screen. Each code involves four presses, some including several buttons that have to be held together, pressing **Select** after each one to enter them. A character should appear on-screen after each one:

Key:



Extra Characters **L1, L1+L2+R2, L1, R1+R2**
Extra Tracks
L1, R1, L1+R1, L1
Submarine **X L1+R1, R1+R2, L1+R1, L2**
Tank Duel
L1+R1, L1, L1, R1+R2
Motor Toon R
L1, L1+R2, R1+R2, R1



[1] Now this really does get confusing. All this transparency can totally destroy your sense of direction. **[2]** There are weapons too like this bomb. **[3]** Sadly the glass doesn't shatter like in *Die Hard Trilogy*. **[4]** If only it had a split-screen mode *Toon* might be the biz.

VERDICT

Essential PlayStation

■ GRAPHICS:

■ SOUND:

■ LIFESPAN:

Bonkers anime **9**

Chugging **7**

Time extended **6**

■ GAMEPLAY:

■ PRESENTATION:

■ ORIGINALITY:

Back-firing **6**

Well polished **8**

Cartoon classic **8**

Disappointing handling and the lack of a split-screen hold this loveable racer back.



Five Star Rating



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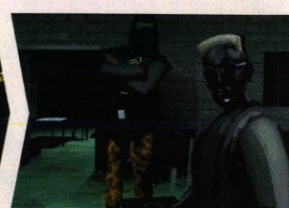
Shellshock

World War I invented this psychological disorder

but it also invented the tank.

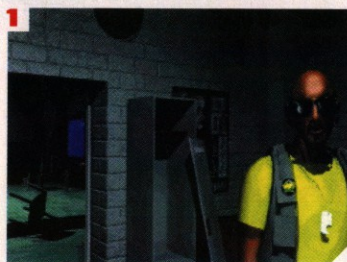
Coincidence? Essential played a realistic tank game to find out...

Intro



Okay, so it's not quite Designer's Republic but it is a game logo.

Few films have revealed the true nature of tanks. Cross of Iron and Attack! are perhaps two notable exceptions, movies that explore the darker side of Action Man's favourite accessory. The truth is that tanks are large lumbering metal gun platforms and not the wee plastic playthings we were all led to think they were. It seems that videogames too have long been taken in by the tank's PR machine, be it in the futuristic zappage of *Battlezone*, the cute pot-shooting of *Micro Machines 3* or the cerebral platform-puzzling of *Assault Rigs*. With all this tank fantasy about *Shellshock* goes bravely against the grain, bringing us a tank game that's



[1] Sad Wardenz bloke. **[2]** More like it, but not impressive enough.



about movement, about scouting out terrain and, above all, about blowing things up. What's immediately apparent is that this comes from the same stable as *Thunderhawk 2*. It's got the same slightly blocky landscape, the same popping up of things on the horizon, the same sort of ragged, yet effective, explosions. Yet where *Thunderhawk* scored in its intuitive feel, aspects of *Shellshock* interfere with your fun immediately. There's no external view, only the

viewing window provided. Maybe it's realistic, but this is a videogame, *Formula 1* manages to provide external views that don't make it seem any less real. You feel that the programmers' reasons for limiting you to this window are more to do with technical short-falls rather than any attempt at historical accuracy. To somewhat compensate for this flattened perspective you are provided with a radar screen showing the positions of far-off enemies. Yet here comes another problem. If you so wish you never



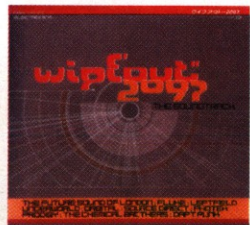
[1] New York posse. **[2]** Enemy watchtowers get in the way. **[3]** An enemy tank. Kill it. **[4]** Embarrassing cut-scenes are, sadly, a big part of *Shellshock*. **[5]** You can shoot things that are only visible on radar. **[6]** Choose what upgrades you want for your tank.



PUBLISHER: Core Design
 STYLE: Tank shoot 'em up
 PRICE: £44.99

Be cool

Some games have got it and some haven't. Unfortunately some games haven't got it and still try to pretend that they have. What are we talking about? Coolness, naturally. Sadly *Shellshock* with its awful stereotyped Eighties-style rap commandos falls at the first hurdle. Meanwhile *Wipeout 2097* eases effortlessly into that coolest of the cool category. Its secret? The good taste to collaborate with real bands rather than some synthesised version of what your grandad reckons 'music today' sounds like.



[1] This blast of random pixels indicates that you've killed something. **[2]** As you complete each mission you earn money to take you further into the game. Unfortunately, you have to upgrade your armour each time. **[3]** A hit, a palpable hit! Knocking out tanks is dead easy.



[1] Creep around obstacles to catch the enemy napping. **[2]** Night vision. Everything looks the same. **[3]** He's an Uzi lover. **[4]** Pick up this prisoner for extra points.

need get within range of an enemy tank, you can merely line them up using your radar before they appear on screen and pound the tiny dots to oblivion. All very clever, and probably what real tank commanders do these days but hardly satisfying for shoot 'em up addicts who like their fun up close and personal and, preferably, spectacular. The kind of spectacle that we've come to expect from PlayStation shoot 'em ups is



You can only view the game from this internal perspective.



sadly lacking here, where are the massive *Krazy Ivan* explosions? Where are the *Die Hard Trilogy* glass-breaking effects? As this hasn't got the speed of a *Tunnel B1* it should make up for it in other ways, but any such compensations are hard to find. You can upgrade your tank but these upgrades are of precious little use when your main gun can do the job just fine. You start off with a big, powerful tank so the addition of a few missiles or a bit of armour here or there makes no real difference. Add to the fact that after each mission you have to replace depleted armour anyway and upgrading ends up being little more than a spot of repair work. Although the missions you are sent on do invariably get tougher, there's no sense of a logical progression from weaker enemies to tougher ones. There are just more of the same weak enemies to blast away each time, a tedious and altogether soul-destroying task. Talking of spirit-sapping, unlike *Thunderhawk*, *Shellshock* has Godawful scenario cut-scenes too featuring the dumbest 1980s rendered ragamuffin stereotypes you ever did see. You'll



scream at these painful throw-backs to shut up and let you get on with playing the game. *Shellshock* is doubly disappointing because there's no doubt that its take on tanks could work. We have realistic driving games, so why not a realistic tank driving game with destructible scenery, a range of progressively tougher enemy tanks and the chance to design your own war chariot? While other games are content to fob us off with comedy tanks more at home in *It's A Knockout* than *Battle of the Bulge*, surely there's a place for a harder hitting tank 'em up? Until then you'll have to make do with *Shellshock*, either that or swallow your pride and go for the futuristic blasting of *Tunnel B1* or *Blam! Machinehead*.



Tips

Cheat Screen

On the Core Design copyright screen press:

Key:



Up, Down, Left, Right,
Down, Down, Right, Right, T

very quickly and you'll get the chance to skip levels, grab all the weapons and then fiddle with everything you are not supposed to.

VERDICT

Essential PlayStation

GRAPHICS:
SOUND:
LIFESPAN:

Churned up 6 GAMEPLAY:
Pounding rhythm 5 PRESENTATION:
Hard missions 7 ORIGINALITY:

Detached 6
Cheesy cut-scenes 3
Old-timer 5

Disappointing tank 'em up that fails to live up to its full-on destructive potential.





[1] The new vapour trail not only looks good but is very useful in the new extra dark tunnels. [2] This is the pit-lane. It slows you down and often involves a longer lap than normal. [3] Ah, the start/finish straight. [4] The treble rocket is just one of several gorgeous new weapons.



Wipeout 2097

It was the killer game in which you couldn't die.

It was the fastest game on earth.

Can it be obsolete already? Essential rides the new faster, deadlier Wipeout...

Wipeout may well go down in history as the one game that finally, irrevocably established the PlayStation's power and potential as the most exciting games console EVER. It may well be the reason that you – yes you! – bought one of the little grey beauties. Futuristic sled racing, with big guns and some stunning, and stunningly quick, visuals would be enough for most. But Psygnosis

completed a proper grown-up package with help from trendy graphics wizards Designers Republic and a throbbing and suitably broody techno soundtrack. Sony themselves can't have been too upset either at a title that so effortlessly oozed exactly the sort of credibility that their marketing plan demanded.

In the desperate scramble for credible sounding criticisms of the game, reviewers managed to come up with a couple of main points. One was sound, the other was moany drivel. Firstly, many lonely souls complained that when

they set off, the field soon became too strung out, leading to long periods of racing when no competitor could be glimpsed. A minor gripe, to be sure, but *Wipeout* wasn't an easy game to criticise. It's also a moan that doesn't apply any more. Some admirable and effective work on the game's artificial

intelligence and an increased field mean that there are more racing hijinks per lap than before, adding immeasurably to the amount of good old-fashioned battling to be had as you skim along each course. The feeling of actual competition against enemies other than the admittedly stylish clock is now



The Tracks: Vector Class



An undeniably gentle introduction to the art of *Wipeoutery*, Talon's Reach and Sagarmatha are set in Canada and Tibet respectively. Long winding turns are the norm in both, and the odd flurry of snow in Tibet shouldn't bother you too much. A good introduction for those who haven't played the original.

The Tracks: Venom Class



The slightly tougher but still not too tricky Venom class tracks, Valparisso and Phenitia Park, offer contrasting scenery and some more demanding turns. The lush greenery of the South American jungle is a stark contrast to the more familiar epic concrete turns of the German hinterland.



PUBLISHER: **Psygnosis**
 STYLE: **Futuristic racing**
 PRICE: **£44.99**



Just as in the original, the ice track is a real challenge. Follow our guidelines on the right.

How to go faster: 14 race tips

- Rather than let the Autopilot disengage on a difficult piece of track (often the cause of a crash), use the 'Discard Weapon' button to manually disengage it in a more manageable area.
- If you activate the Autopilot as you're approaching the pit lane, it decides for itself whether you need to pit or not. Some pit lanes are quite tricky to negotiate and having an Autopilot to guide you safely through can be useful.
- Be careful not to activate an Autopilot when your ship is suffering the effects of an Electrobolt strike as the electronic disturbance will cause you to fly very slowly. If you do accidentally activate the Autopilot whilst electrobolted, discard it immediately.
- If you have a missile or rocket power-up, wait until you are quite close to the enemy before firing at them. When enemy craft are hit, they initially spin up in the air and if you're close enough you can fly safely underneath.
- Keep your finger on the thrust button when air braking or you'll lose too much speed. Toggle the air brake buttons rather than holding them down continuously.
- If you're racing close to an enemy ship as you approach a bend, be sure to take the inside line – if you do knock into him, it'll probably help you around the corner.
- Always make use of the speed-up arrows, they can help a lot with overtaking.
- Only use the air brakes when you really have to as they can slow you down considerably, especially when you're going uphill. A useful air-braking skill is to use them to slide over any speed-up arrows at the start of bends.
- Don't hang on to the shield power-up for too long unless your shields are really low. While it's active you won't be able to fire any weapons or use any other pick-ups.
- Use the Up and Down directional buttons to raise and lower the nose in flight. Lowering the nose on a jump will gain you a little extra speed whilst raising and it will make for a softer landing.
- Quickly discard power-ups that you don't need; you'll never pick up the same weapon twice in succession. Power-ups are random but weighted according to your position in the race. Thus, when you're lagging behind, you're more likely to pick up turbos and autopilots and when you're in the lead you are more likely to pick up shields and mines.
- The special Emergency E-Pak pick-up restores shield energy but only becomes available once your shield energy is less than 25%. Although there's a good chance of E-Paks appearing when you really need them the pit lane is the only sure way to recharge your shields.
- To avoid crashes, only use the Turbo Boost power-up on straight stretches. Do not use them at all on the Rapier and Phantom tracks.
- Never use the Turbo Boost power-up immediately after the Quake Disruptor – the chances are that you'll accelerate straight into the Quake's destructive epicentre.



If you use air brakes then practice swerving so that you pass over the speed-up arrows.



- [1] Advertising and corporate branding is very much to the forefront once more. [2] The weapons are distributed, as previously, through these track icons. [3] A good example of *Wipeout 2097*'s much sunnier climes. It almost looks idyllic. [4] You're approaching top speed, but there's a left-hander coming up. [5] One of the new catamaran-ish sleds being placed on the track. [6] You're approaching a chasm. Get ready. [7] The arrow shows your link-up opponent.

Designers for life

Once again, the ultra-trendy Designers Republic graphic artists have been called in to give the presentation a good polish. These nifty team icons are typical of their rather lovely work. Love that DR.



More head-to-head serial link action as you battle against a mate AND the rest of the field.



→ cranked up to the maximum.

The other main snipe that many aimed at the game concerned its alleged inaccessibility. True, you could be bowling along a straight at speeds well in excess of anything recommended by the Safety Council and clip the side of the gutter-like track just slightly and, with the sort of deceleration normally associated with head-on crashes, you'd be left at a virtual stand-still. You then had to go through the lengthy process of building up your momentum again, leaving the cack-handed wide open to another frustrating piece of wall clippage. This, the game's detractors claimed, scuppered the game's pick-up-and-play appeal.

More Power [Ups]



Mines

Releases group of five mines, which then lie in wait for a while before self-destructing. Boring because you can't see them in action, frustrating when you hit them, but still extremely useful.

Emergency

A good old-fashioned health power-up to me and you. Simply activate it to top up your all-important shield levels. This is vital now that your sled can be destroyed by too many hits.

Turbo Boost

A firm favourite of adrenaline junkies, this speeds your ship up temporarily. Naturally, it's far too fast to handle any corners but is useful on long straights or for ultra-quick post-collision acceleration.

Rockets

An upgrade of the previous game's rockets, these now come in track covering threes and shoot out straight ahead of you in a horizontal line. Useful against a pack of sleds.

Missile

These heat-seekers now boast a spinning lock-on and reverse lock notification. Once locked on, you're guaranteed a hit. Especially useful on the final lap to take out anyone who dares to overtake.

Ballcocks to all that. Part of *Wipeout's* charm is that gamers are asked to master a new style of racing centred on the inevitably floaty handling of things that, well, float. What many sniping journalists seemed to forget was that people who actually hand over 50 notes of their hard-earned rarely do so for a 'quick-go'. Anybody willing to persevere even slightly with the game's unusual dynamics soon uncovered a world of technique and racing right up there with any of the *Ridge Racer* series.

Still, there's nothing wrong with a gentle learning curve to ease rookie racers in, so Psygnosis have diluted the original's demanding handling somewhat. Hard-core *Wipeouts*, those who have mastered the first game, may be grinding their teeth to stumps at the



[1] Just one of the game's many breathtaking descents. **[2]** Now might be good time to let a rocket off - if only you had one. **[3]** You've got one now but you're in the pit-lane where it's no use. **[4]** Fire... Doh! You can't use it now because you've got your shield turned on. Darn.



The Tracks: Rapier Class



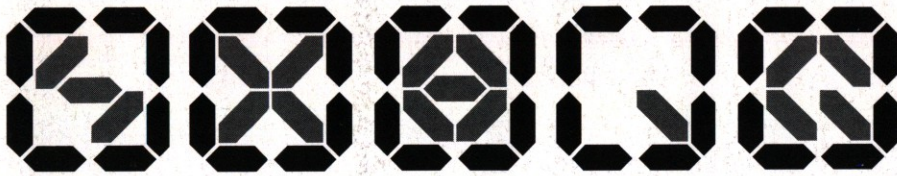
Gare D'Europa takes place in a disused French Metro and, as you'd expect, offers an overload of frighteningly dark tunnels for you to negotiate. Odessa Keys is even more impressive, bobbing gently as you make your way round it. It's suspended above the Black Sea from huge hoverlifts, apparently.

The Tracks: Phantom Class



The Phantom class tracks, Vostok Island and Spilkinanke, are not picturesque preferring a truly sinister mood and look absolutely in tune with the rock hard challenge their sinewy raceways present. Jumps into sharp turns and fiendish corner groupings will push even the best racers to the limit.

Wipeout 2097



Electrobolt

This charge of destructive energy has also undergone a face-lift, appearing now as a bustling storm of blue energy. It shakes, damages and slows any vehicle it hits. Devious but great.

Thunder Bomb

A smart bomb style weapon that looks like a mine until it explodes damaging all ships within visible range. The trouble is it does tend to blind you in the process so only use it on straights.

Shield

A boring but useful power-up that cloaks you in a translucent nutshell, protecting you from attack. Sadly you can't fire weapons while it's on but you can still pick them up to use when it runs out.

Plasma Bolt

It's tricky to get a hit with the plasma bolt, thanks to its two second charge time and lack of seeking ability but any hit results in serious damage. Line it up on a straight and have a pop.

Quake

One of the best things ever, the Quake sends a huge destructive ripple steaming down the track, hoisting upwards any craft in its path. Easily the most stunning effect in any PS game.

very thought but there's really nothing to worry about. It's an indication of just how good the first game was that a slight nip and tuck to the handling is all that's been necessary. The feel of the racing really hasn't changed as much as we'd feared. It's still in a skiddy, skimmy world of its own, and still manages the not unimpressive trick of making completely fictitious vehicles feel real. In fact, the changes amount to two minor adjustments. There's a slightly firmer feel to the turning and occasional contact with the wall will not result in the lurching halts that put so many learners off before.

Concessions to the beginner don't stop there either. Two new

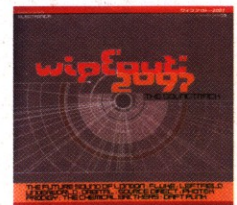
classes have been added to the previous pair. The Vector class now joins the Venom and Rapier settings to give the beginner a slower, more gentle grounding in the arcane arts of rapid sleddery. And you scowling at the back, cheer up, Phantom class is added after Rapier (the blindingly speedy top division of the F3600 series) and somehow manages to be even more nerve-frayingly quick. Jaws dropped when the old top division was unveiled and believe us, a first glimpse of the speeds reached in Phantom competition should see chins hitting floors. It makes 2097 easily the fastest racing



[1] More lush greenery. Shouldn't that be gone by 2097? [2] Fogging effects are put to good use to convey the Arctic cold.

game on the PlayStation, bar none. Truly frightening stuff. Best of all is the fact that clean lapping is still required to set respectable times and that when you do start to achieve it you'll experience the very real rush that *Ridge* fans know lies at the heart of any truly great racing game. Bad 'driving' can still be frustrating but a good clean lap in the higher levels of the game will leave you almost literally breathless. Those with weak hearts may want to think twice. Or die happy.

Naturally, *Wipeout 2097* amounts to so much more than a slight tune up. It's especially tempting with racing games just to give the punter new tracks (after all if they liked the first game then they'll probably want them). As it happens 2097's tracks surpass even the high octane thrills offered by its predecessor and there's more variety than ever on offer, with epic drops, climbs and jumps aplenty. The new venues are more varied too



Proper music

One of *Wipeout*'s greatest innovations was the introduction of new fangled modern dance music 'compos' to the soundtrack. The 2097 soundtrack is even better than its forebear, taking on more drum 'n' bass and, if anything, coming on even more sinister and broody. Just check out this track listing and tell us you're not impressed. Go on...

WE HAVE EXPLOSIVE F.S.O.L
ATOM BOMB Fluke*
LOOPS OF FURY
The Chemical Brothers
TIN THERE Underworld*
THE THIRD SEQUENCE Photek*
LEAVE HOME
The Chemical Brothers
WE HAVE EXPLOSIVE (HERD KILLING) F.S.O.L
FIRESTARTER (INSTRUMENTAL)
Prodigy
V SIX Fluke*
MUSIQUE Daft Punk*
WIPEOUT 2097 Source Direct*
TITAN Photek*
PETROL Orbital*
AFRORIDE Leftfield*

* exclusive to Wipeout 2097



[1] It's not often that you see one of those, now, is it? [2] The Aztec styled course is definitely the prettiest. [3] Your autopilot shows its usual faultless navigational skills, letting you catch up your opponent. [4] Feed me? Now?



Essential Playtest

[1] You're going the wrong way. Never a good idea. **[2]** You're about to pass through the checkpoint with over 20 seconds to spare. Well done. **[3]** Jink through this gently winding tunnel but make sure you're in the right position for the sharp left. **[4]** Britva?



Head-to-head: Link-up



Wipeout 2097 supports the link cable, and it just so happens that its potent mix of weaponry and racing make it one of the very best two-player link-up games available. Here at Essential PlayStation we have whiled away many a happy hour in this most fiercely competitive of pastimes. We unreservedly recommend that you coerce a friend into purchasing the game, get a cable and do the same. Race either as a lonely pair, or amongst a field of twelve, and feel free to mock your opponent's ridiculously clunky arrow (the only ugly thing in the whole game). We reckon it's a cinch for a guest spot at the next Olympic Games.

from the leafy and positively sunny locale of Valparriso to many that are even darker than the brooding F3600 circuits. However, new tracks aren't enough. Racing games are now one of the main arenas in which games companies at all levels battle for technological supremacy. Good as *Wipeout's* engine was it wasn't perfect, there were improvements to be made.

Sadly, (but not too sadly given its sheer quality) few major improvements are obvious in the main graphics engine responsible for

drawing the tracks themselves, scenery hoves into view at roughly the same distance as before. That's not to say that the game doesn't look better though. It does, thanks to several spanking new effects that enliven the already far from pedestrian cyber-shenanigans considerably. The new explosions are some of the most impressive seen on the PlayStation and the addition of subtleties like the spinning lock-on sight and glowing gas exhausts help to give the game a very thorough and significant polish.

Designers Republic are back on board again and their iconic work is even more dominant. The cheesy cartoon portraits of the racers have been rightly dumped, and from the stunning intro through the best loading screen ever seen and into the tracks themselves, *2097* is as stylish and downright serious about itself as a game could ever get.

More significantly, and just as excitingly, *2097* sees the unveiling of a complete structural make-over. There's now a much more 'traditional' arcade agenda with

Know your sleds

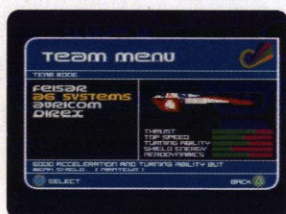
It may only have been back in Part One that we reviewed the original *Wipeout* but 45 years have already passed. In the future... erm, if you see what we mean. The year is - yes! - 2097 and the F3500 ships of Psygnosis' technological pacesetter have been consigned to the

scrapyard, to be replaced with a new selection of sleds competing in the all-new F5000 championship. There's more variety in the body work and handling and even a ship that has been stripped down for pure mind-bending speed, leaving it totally unarmed!



Feisar

The Feisar is the easiest ship to fly and the best for acclimatising to new courses. Although it is the slowest craft in the game, it has a good turning circle and solid shield capability. For beginners.



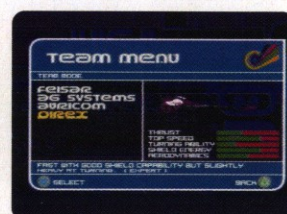
AG Systems

The AG Systems ship is faster than Feisar but enjoys the same cornering ability. However, it also has the weakest shields and requires more frequent trips to the pit lane to top them up.



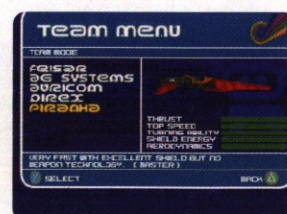
Auricom

Auricom is the ideal ship for intermediate pilots; it's a little faster than the AG Systems model but rather more difficult to take through the corners. You'll need to know the courses with this.



Qirex

Your ultimate aim is to fly the Qirex ship, the fastest and toughest craft in the game. Cornering in the Qirex is extremely difficult and a mastery of the air brakes is essential for effective racing. Tricky.



Piranha

The Piranha ship is not selectable until you've finished all of the tracks (or until you cheat) but it's well worth the wait. It can't use power-ups, but each and every other attribute is maxed out. Scary.

Wipeout 2097

Tips

Here are the cheats known to date. Like everything else about the game, they're great.

Various Cheats

Key:

X= [X] T= [T]
O= [O] S= [S]
R1 [R1] R2 [R2]
L1 [L1] L2 [L2]

Animal teams

While the game loads hold L1 + R2 + Start + Select
The standard sleds become a bee, snail, UFO, pig and shark.

Pre-games various

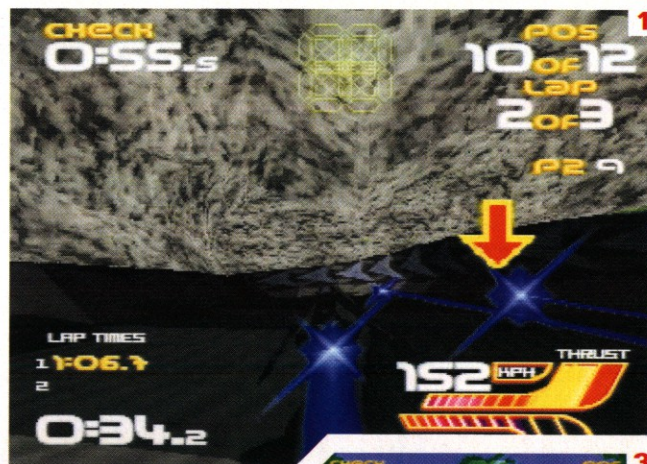
Enter at the main menus.
Piranha Team XXXXOTS
Phantom Class TTTTOO
Eight Tracks SOTOS

In-game various

Pause during play and hit...
Machine Gun SOXSOT
Infinite Energy TXXOTXS
Infinite Weapons XXSSOOT
Infinite Time TSOXTSOX

Phantom & Piranha

Enter these at the password screen to access the Phantom class and Piranha sled. It also allows you to race each of the tracks at the class of your choice. Very nice.



[1] An attractive and quite untypically well lit ice tunnel. Sadly, you're lagging behind the other player. [2] The last fading remnants of one of the game's highly impressive explosions. [3] Not actually an instruction, but one of the game's many mock adverts that add authenticity.

checkpoints that crank up the tension, together with a suitably scary klaxon when time's running out. Also making a debut is your shield. Previously the weapons you picked up as you stormed around the track had only one function – to slow the other fellas down. Obviously they were deployed at you with the same touching intentions, but no-one got hurt. Now they do. Each hit and every contact with a wall depletes your shield. If it runs out, you die. For you the race is over. This not only adds to the white-knuckle thrills but, thanks to the addition of a recharging pit-lane, adds a tactical element. Can you really survive another lap, or should you temporarily sacrifice a few



places by taking a time-consuming trawl through the pit-lane? Seen in this context the new speed friendly walls still threaten your progress so you still need to lap cleanly.

And the weapons themselves? Simply stunning. All the old weapons have been given a polish, and several new ones join the fray, to devastating effect. Just unleash your first Quake and tell us you're not pleased with yourself. The firing of this behemoth of a weapon ranks in our all-time top 10 videogame moments, sending a massive ripple surging down the track and tossing your hapless opponents aside. Then get on the end of someone else's Quake and tell us you're not traumatised. Top stuff. As before, the weapons (or power-ups really – they're not all offensive) are



carefully rationed around the track and you're restricted to one at a time. This is definitely a Good Thing as continuous gunplay would undoubtedly infringe on the racing, which still remains the game's strongest suit by a long chalk.

Wipeout fanatics may not get quite the same rush of discovery as when they first played the original but the thrills were always much deeper than that anyway. Once the higher levels are attained even the most desperate adrenaline junkie will find enough breakneck racing to feed their addiction to speed.



[1] A Quake weapon rips up the track in front of you, and anyone foolish enough to be driving on it. [2] Push your nose down to gain extra speed. [3] An eerie darkness descends beneath the glacier.



Essential
PlayStation

GRAPHICS:

Simply amazing 9

GAMEPLAY:

Out on its own 9

Not as breathtaking a sequel as the first was a game, but still better than the original.

SOUND:

Even better 9

PRESENTATION:

Unbeatable 10

LIFESPAN:

Bigger, better, faster more 8

ORIGINALITY:

Still unusual 8



Five Star Rating

Essential Selection



Definitely Retro

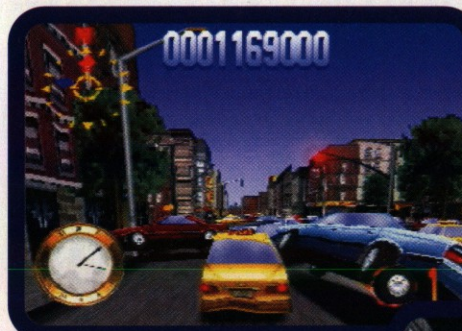
Great games, like great tunes, don't pop out of thin air. Ideas are borrowed, techniques stolen, styles pillaged. Just ask Sir Noel Gallagher. In this spirit of retro, *Essential* exposes how the classics of yesteryear influence today's, and even tomorrow's, super games...

It wasn't just *Space Invaders*. There exists beneath the sub-strata of modern gaming a dusty pantheon of ancient videogames, many of which paved the way for today's gaming works of genius. Just as Oasis would be nowhere without the Beatles, The Prodigy would be lost without Kraftwerk and Boyzone are, erm, frankly better off without Take That, games like *Die Hard Trilogy*, *Ridge Racer Revolution*, *Tomb Raider* and *Jumping Flash* owe their success to early pioneers of videogamery. But where are these hoary old souls? What are they like? And why are such digital antiques of interest to '90s gamers?

Although the daddy of them all, *Space Invaders*, is sadly no longer with us, a surprisingly large slice of gaming history is due mainly to PlayStation retro arcade compilations from Namco and Williams.

At first glance, the collection of titles that make up *Namco Museum Volume 1* may not excite your interest. On closer inspection, though, three gems shine through: *Galaga*, *Pole Position* and *Pac-Man*. *Galaga* was part of the triumvirate of *Space Invader* clones (*Galaxian*, *Galaga*, *Caplus*) that set the ground rules for the modern shoot 'em up. Enemies with different attack patterns, power-ups and a system of lives and bonuses have all found their way into '90s blasters like *Tunnel B1*, *Krazy Ivan* and *BLAM! Machinehead*. You know that strange twitchy feeling as you strafe from side to side in *BLAM!*? Well, *Galaga* had it in 1981. And what about that crack shot that takes out a lone enemy loitering just within range in *Tunnel B1*? Yup, *Galaga* got there first, too.

Perhaps more obvious is the debt that racers like *F1*, *Wipeout 2097* and *Ridge Racer Revolution* owe to Namco's *Pole Position*. It introduced the blueprint for both graphics (the rear-view, driving into the screen, the track scrolling



Die Hard Trilogy, Ridge Racer and Doom are all based on classic arcade games of the past. There are few 'new' ideas.

around you) and gameplay (side-to-side, dodging out to overtake) that all other track-based racing games were to follow. Luckily, its habit of blowing you up any time you hit anything is something that later generations of racers chose to leave by the wayside.

A rather stranger connection altogether is the link between *Pac-Man* and all-time blasting classic *Doom*. *Pac-Man* was the original arcade maze game that had you manoeuvring the eponymous yellowing Pac through sheet after sheet of pills and ghosts. Eat all the pills and avoid all the ghosts – except when you find a power pill and can gobble up the spooky blighters. *Pac-Man* would inspire more complex maze games like *Sabre Wulf*, *Gauntlet* and *Tower Of Druga* that, with a little help from the RPG genre, would eventually burgeon forth into three dimensions with the ground-breaking 3D *Monster Maze*. From there it was but a small step to the *Doom* games. The 'hunt or



Don't look Pac in anger...

If 'old classic' translates as 'ancient drive!' in your book, then re-educate yourself with a look at some grand old games that you can still play, thanks to Namco:

Pac-Man

Genre: Maze game

Location: Namco Museum Volume 1

Modern descendants: *Loaded*, *Doom...*

A game all about talking pills and seeing spooks. Direct a rotund little fella around a series of mazes, avoiding the ghosts that haunt its corridors. Gobble up a 'power pill' and you can turn on the evil spirits and swallow them whole. Simple in the extreme, the maze idea was to catch on, turn 3D and eventually rule the world as game-god *Doom*.

Galaxian

Genre: Shoot 'em up

Location: Namco Museum Volume 3

Modern descendants: *Tunnel B1*, *BLAM! Machinehead...*

The younger, smarter brother of *Space Invaders*. You patrol along the bottom of the screen, facing an onslaught of dive-bombing kamikaze aliens who swoop down in formation to attack. Has influenced every shoot 'em up since and remains supremely playable.

Mappy

Genre: Platformer

Location: Namco Museum Volume 2

Modern descendants: *Crash Bandicoot*, *Pandemonium...*

Prehistoric but distinctly jolly platform game featuring Mappy the police mouse. Leap around, picking up objects (stereos, computers, safes) and slamming doors (!) in the faces of your villainous feline pursuers. Still fun after all these years, it spawned a million platform clones. And Mappy? He went on to design racing cars for the highly successful *Ridge Racer*.

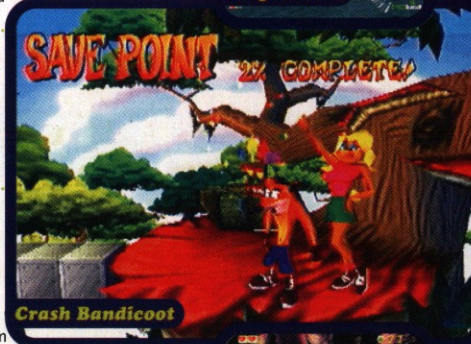
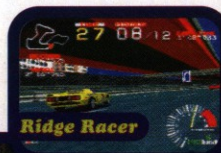
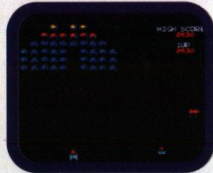
Pole Position

Genre: Racer

Location: Namco Museum Volume 1

Modern descendants: *Formula 1*, *Ridge Racer Revolution...*

Who would've dreamed that this clunky racer would be the first step towards some of the finest gameplay experiences known to man? *Pole* couldn't be simpler – just move your car left or right as the track and occasional other cars scroll towards you. The least rewarding of the lot.



Definitely Retro

Don't confuse...

Pac-Man



Large, yellow character who eats power pills for breakfast and never stops gobbling. AKA 'the thinking man's sprite'.

Paxman



Larger-than-life character who eats politicians for breakfast and never stops talking. AKA 'the thinking woman's crumpet'.

Live forever

No nostalgia is needed to enjoy these two classics. They are eternal stars in the gamesplaying firmament. Top entertainment too...

Tempest X

3D shoot 'em up in which you run around a series of lanes, picking off alien craft as they spin and skip towards you. Initially as easy as keeping the fire-button down as you move, the grids get progressively harder until they reach a crescendo of manic, knee-jerk blasting. Compulsive. ★★★★★

Bust A Move 2

The perfect mix of two-player rivalry, cute graphics and frantic action, all against the clock. The only puzzle game that will bring you out in a sweat, make you row with your best mates and invade your dreams with images of multi-coloured bubbles. Utterly insane, utterly brilliant. ★★★★★



be hunted' feel, the running away only to turn on your enemies, the fear of running into something lurking round the corner – all this 'maze' element *Doom* derives from *Pac-Man*. Even closer cousins of *Pac-Man* are *Loaded* and *Reloaded*, still essentially 2D maze games but with the emphasis more on running around, guns blazing.

Moving on, there's the PlayStation's platform heritage to consider. *Crash Bandicoot*, *Pandemonium* and *Mickey's Wild Adventure* all owe their origins to old arcade platformers like Namco's *Mappy*. *Mappy* was a diminutive police mouse who got chased across platforms by rabid cats. The game was two-dimensional and simplistic, true, but although they may look more 3D, *Crash* and *Pandemonium*'s enemy-avoiding, power-up collecting and leaping action is high-on identical to the shenanigans to be had in this prehistoric title. It's a tribute to the game style it helped to spawn that *Mappy* is still fun to play a decade and a half after its inception. Even the technically accomplished *Tomb Raider* draws on *Mappy*'s talents through the intermediary of later 3D puzzle/platformers such

as *KnightLore* and *Head Over Heels*.

It's very rare that classic games make it down through the years and on to your PlayStation virtually unchanged but two such evergreen entertainers are *Tempest* and *Bust A Move 2*. *Tempest* was the prototype 3D shoot 'em up that used simple line-drawn grids stretching away from you into the screen. Geometrically shaped 'walkers' twisted along the grid towards you and it was your job to zip around the outside, making them eat electric death. Graphically simplistic, the 3D effect worked surprisingly well, especially as you'd often flip 'upside-down' while blasting, for added queasiness. Although *Tempest* paved the way for countless 3D games it deserved an appearance on the PlayStation in its own right, and got one – as *Tempest X*. While the graphics are still distinctly minimalist, it remains as addictive as ever.

The undisputed retro champion, though, has to be Taito's *Bust A Move 2*. Originally produced for the SNK arcade machine and then moving on to the Neo Geo as *Puzzle Bobble*, *BAM2* is a puzzle game that initially would seem to have only cutesy graphics to recommend it. Yet beneath this friendly exterior lurks a gameplay experience of mind-bending ferocity as two players lock intellects in a struggle to survive. Instead of carefully fitting blocks together (as in *Tetris*) you align rows of bubbles that then explode, clearing your side of the screen and adding more bubbles to your opponent's. Like that other Taito classic, *Space Invaders*, the action gets ever-more frantic as the bubbles are lowered towards the bottom of the screen and your certain demise. *Pacman*-esque panic at its best.

Yet in the rush towards improved graphics and ever more complex gameplay, is there really anything we can learn from these old masters? If the next crop of releases are anything to go by, the answer would have to be 'yes'. *Syndicate Wars*, with its twisted isometric view, could almost be a souped-up version of the old Williams game, *Robotron*. *Micro Machines 3*, a top-down-viewed racer, can't escape comparisons with *Rally X*. *Final Fantasy VII* traces its lineage back to the original fighting RPG, *Dragon Blaster*.

Great games don't come out of nowhere; inevitably they draw on more than a decade of gaming know-how. But rip-off merchants, beware – our games heritage harbours many more misses than hits. The trick, as always, is to steal from the best.

Retro! Retro! Retro!

Here's the full line-up for those retro gaming anthologies:

Namco Museum Vol 1

£39.99 ★★

Bosconian
Galaga
Pac-Man
Pole Position
Rally-X
Toytop

Namco Museum Vol 2

£44.99 ★★★

Dragon Blaster
Gaplus
Grobdia
Mappy
Super Pac-Man
Xevious

Namco Museum Vol 3

£39.99 ★★

Dig Dug
Galaxian
Ms Pac-Man
Phozon
Pole Position II
Tower Of Druaga

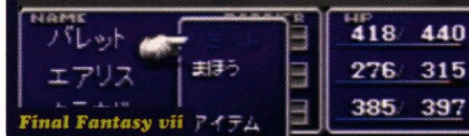
Williams Arcade's

Greatest Hits

£39.99 ★★

Bubbles
Defender I
Defender II
Robotron 2084
Sinistar

Syndicate Wars



Back to the future: These upcoming releases still betray the influence of great games past. *Robotron*, *Rally X* and *Dragon Blaster* live on!

Micro Machines 3



NEW!

**NEW MAGAZINE
FRESH CONCEPT
REAL DEALS**

Issue one
comes with
a set of hex
keys **FREE**

Get Total Bike and sort
the rad from the radish...

NEW!

often means more of the same. But in this case new means different. Different because we have pumped 132 colour pages full with straight talking bike and accessory tests. Read the bike buyers bible...

GIVES IT TO YOU STRAIGHT

20 SHADES RATED

Total Bike

LOCK IT AND LOSE IT! 30 locks trashed

USED & ABUSED
How to buy secondhand

BIKE SHED
Every new bike on the market listed and rated

BIKE SHED BUYERS GUIDE

Eight £500 cycles in our exclusive

MONSTER BIKE TEST

HITS THE
SHELVES
LAST
WEEK OF
APRIL

**PRICE:
ONE QUID**

BUDGET

round-up

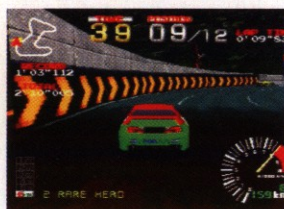
£20 burning a hole in your pocket?

Then you'll want to check out the new Platinum budget range from SCE. Essential selects the priceless gems that will cost you no more than £19.99...

ESSENTIAL VALUE

Ridge Racer

The amazing thing about Sony's flagship launch title is not that it's a slice of gaming nostalgia but that two years on it's still an incredibly addictive and playable racer. It was the first in the *Racer* trilogy, preceding *Ridge Racer Revolution* and *Rage Racer*. Like a cult TV show everything about *Ridge* comes together to produce a uniquely entertaining experience. From the design of the cars, to the hoardings, and the levels, everything is carefully crafted to give the illusion of speed. *Ridge* is a fantasy of city racing with one basic track onto which extra hazards and features are added to make later races more exciting. While this is paltry compared to *Revolution's* proper three courses and *Rage Racer's* seemingly infinite combinations of different tracks with Time Trials, a supercar to



(1) Unlike in the sequel it's pretty easy to powerslide around *Ridge's* arcing corners. (2) Drive the tracks in reverse. (3) There's no rearview mirror to warn of cars approaching to overtake. (4) The lovely 13th Racing devil car.

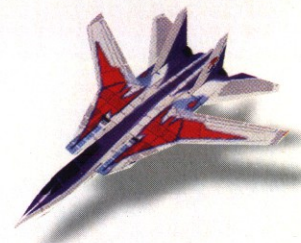


(1) Sitting targets in *Air Combat*. (2) Dog-fight around this bridge. (3) Banking in your dodgy plane.

catch and the chance to race the whole thing in reverse you're getting an awful lot of racing for your £20. Unlike *Revolution* this also gives you plenty of chances to powerslide – one of the game's many hidden depths. Even if you already have the very similar *Revolution*, at this price *Ridge* is incredible value. ★★★★★

Air Combat

Not all arcade games conversions are an unqualified success, as *Air Combat* goes to prove. While it's visually stimulating (your plane's a bit ropy but everything else looks good) it's criminally lacking in depth. *Air Combat* looks like a flight simulation but is only more of a shoot 'em up that just happens to take place in mid-air. You are presented with a series of missions to undertake but your instructions amount to little more than giving everything a good strafe. As you might expect airborne combat is the most satisfying part of the game. Initially, you'll enjoy sneaking up behind some unsuspecting fighter pilot and sticking a heat-seeking missile up his tailpipe. Unfortunately, like the missions themselves, the fun is over far too quickly as the enemy forces aren't tough enough to put up any more than token resistance. Superficially attractive, bear in mind that beneath its glitzy surface this is just a souped-up version of that arcade golden-oldie, *Afterburner*. ★★



In true arcade fashion the red arrow points to your next target. Unlike *Thunderhawk 2* you don't need any strategy to complete your objectives.





ESSENTIAL VALUE

Tekken

While *Virtua Fighter* may have overshadowed it in the arcades, *Tekken*'s conversion to the PlayStation saw it hailed as the best fighting game around. Even now the fighters are still impressive in all their over-muscled polygon glory. Yet it wasn't on looks alone that *Tekken* earned cult status, its bias towards realistic moves, its eschewing of the traditional ring for a more free-form affair plus eight well-balanced fighters gave it immediate playability. Beneath this accessibility lurked a mountainous challenge even for the experienced player with individual sub-bosses for each fighter and the chance to defeat and play as the final boss, Devil Kazuya. If that wasn't incentive enough beautiful rendered sequences await your character's successful completion of the game, each one rounding off the character's life story nicely. Needless to say the two-player mode is terrific and offers a fascinating spectrum of

combatants from fast but weak to powerful but slow. If you've already spent £50 on *Tekken 2* this doesn't offer any more options, but if you're yet unequipped with a fighting game this is an absolute must. It simply demonstrates what glorious 3D your PlayStation can do.

★★★★

Battle Arena Toshinden

This was the first fighting game to reach the PlayStation and stunned everyone with its 3D looks while *Tekken* was just a twinkle in an arcade designer's eye. The wholesale introduction of weapons was a novelty, as were the spectacular lighting effects and camera angles while the fighting ring remained firmly traditional. It was immediately apparent however that *Toshinden* had a fatal flaw, its difficulty level was set far too low. It wasn't unusual for players to finish the game on their first go and without *Tekken*'s hierarchy of bosses to take on there was little incentive to play the game through again with a different character. Other fair criticisms levelled against it were that there was too much of a delay between a pad press and a move being performed on screen and that the characters didn't have enough moves for you to master. While *Toshinden* does come up short in all these areas it's undeniable that the overall package is still attractive. A showcase beat 'em up that looks great but doesn't offer enough challenge for hardened fight fans.

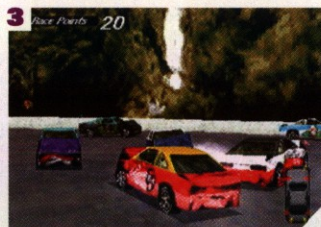
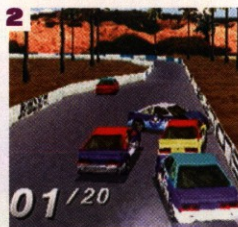
★★★



(1) *Tekken*'s throws are something special with head-spinning lifts like this that even Mr Hulk Hogan would admire. (2) Yoshimitsu the ninja is the only armed character. Cleverly the abilities of the other fighters balance this out.



Essential Round-up



Destruction Derby

Another spectacular title that's worth a look for £20, *Destruction Derby* excels at creating spectacular set pieces with cars crumpling, spinning and smoking at every twisty turn. The car dynamics are top class and you really feel like you're ramming walls and other cars. The problem is that collisions happen far too often and, with narrow straights and lots of dangerous intersections it's tough just to get to the finish line intact, let alone build up a fair whack of speed. As one of the earliest and most successful PlayStation titles it might seem unfair to suggest that *Destruction Derby 2* was the game this should have been, but criticisms of the gameplay are missing, notably the intelligence of the other drivers. If you want high speed racing then *Destruction* may leave you feeling short-changed. On the other hand, if you fancy indulging in a bit of reckless driving that you can't get had up for, *DD* is an enjoyable joyride. ★★

(1) Although *Wipeout* does possess an external view you'll soon learn that the internal is better. (2) Unlike most racers the track slopes dramatically. (3) The blue line up ahead is a speed-up arrow that makes you go faster. (4) Any contact with other ships or the sides will slow you to a crawl.



ESSENTIAL VALUE

Wipeout

If you've got £20 in your pocket right now and can only afford to buy one budget game then *Wipeout* should be it. Quite simply, it's one of the fastest, toughest and most rewarding racers you're ever likely to own. Enter the futuristic world of magnetic sled racing where you hover only centimetres above a track, taking turns and jumps at hundreds of Kmh. First learn the courses, then work your way up the pack, finally trying to blast the leaders out of the way with a range of satisfying weapons. The only real complaint you'll have is that it is tricky to control and may prove disheartening when you ricochet off the walls and get slowed to a frustrating crawl. The flip side is that your perseverance will be rewarded, there's nothing quite like notching up your first super-fast lap as, without hitting anything, your momentum just builds and builds. If you haven't got the sequel, *Wipeout 2097*, then this is a cheap way of getting your sled racing thrills, and if you have then, no doubt, you'll be greedy for the original's classic circuits and another excellent soundtrack. ★★★★★



Each sled/ship has different handling and power as well as a designer paint job.





Key:

★★★★★	Essential purchase	★★★	Good but flawed	★	Not recommended
★★★★	Highly recommended	★★	Average		

Actua Soccer	★★★★★	Doom	★★★★★	Namco Museum V2	★★★	Shellshock	★★
Actua Golf	★★★★★	Destruction Derby	★★★	Namco Museum V3	★★★	Sim City 2000	★★★
adidas Power Soccer	★★★★★	Destruction Derby 2	★★★★	Nascar Racing	★★	Shock Wave Assault	★
	★★★★		★★★★	NBA: In the Zone	★★★	Sim City 2000	★★★
Agile Warrior	★★★	Earthworm Jim 2	★★	NBA Jam: TE	★★★	Slam 'N' Jam	★
Air Combat	★★★	ESPN Extreme Games	★★★	NBA Live '96	★★★	Smash Court Tennis	★★★★★
AIV Train Evolution	★★	Extreme Pinball	★★	Need for Speed	★★★		
Alien Trilogy	★★★	Fade to Black	★★★★★	NHL '97	★★★	Starblade Alpha	★
Alone in the Dark 2	★★	FIFA Soccer '96	★★	Novastorm	★	Starfighter 3000	★★
Andretti Racing	★★★	FIFA Soccer '97	★★★	Off World Interceptor	★	Starwinder	★
Assault Rigs	★★★	Final Doom	★★★★★	Olympic Soccer	★★	StreetFighter: The Movie	★
Aquanaut's Holiday	★★★	Firestorm: Thunderhawk 2	★★★★★	Pandemonium	★★★	StreetFighter Alpha	★★★★★
Battle Arena Toshinden	★★	Firo and Klawd	★	Panzer General	★★★	Striker '96	★★
	★★★★	Formula 1	★★★★★	Penny Racers	★	Supersonic Racers	★★★★★
Battle Arena Toshinden 2	★★★	Galaxian 3	★	PGA Tour '96	★★★	Tempest X	★★★★★
Black Dawn	★★★★★	Gex	★★★★	PGA Tour '97	★★★	Tekken	★★★★★
Blam! Machinehead	★★★★★	Goalstorm	★★★★	Philosoma	★	Tekken 2	★★★★★
Blast Chamber	★★★	Gunship 2000	★★	Pitball	★	Theme Park	★★★
Blazing Dragons	★★	Hardcore 4X4	★★★	Player Manager	★	Time Commando	★★
Break Point Tennis	★★	Hi-Octane	★★★★	Power Move Wrestling	★	Tomb Raider	★★★★★
Broken Sword	★★★	Impact Racing	★★	Power Serve Tennis	★	Total Eclipse	★★
Bust-A-Move 2	★★★★★	Iron and Blood	★	Primal Rage	★	Total NBA '96	★★★★★
Burning Road	★★	ISS Deluxe	★★★★	Project Overkill	★★★	Track & Field	★★★★
Casper	★	Johnny Bazookatone	★	Project X2	★★	True Pinball	★★
Cheesy the Mouse	★		★★★★	Pro Pinball: The Web	★★★	Tunnel B1	★★★★★
Command & Conquer	★★★★★	Jumping Flash	★★★	Psychic Detective	★★	Twisted Metal	★★★★★
	★★★★	Jumping Flash 2	★★★	Raging Skies	★★	Victory Boxing	★★★★★
Contra	★★	Kileak the Blood	★	Raiden	★★	Warhammer: SothR	★★★★★
Cool Boarders	★★	Krazy Ivan	★★★	Rapid Reload	★★	Warhawk	★★
Crash Bandicoot	★★★	Loaded	★★★★	Rayman	★★★★★	Williams Arcade Hits	★★
Creature Shock	★	Lomax	★★	Reloaded	★★	Wing Commander 3	★★★
Criticom	★★★	Lone Soldier	★★	Resident Evil	★★★★★	Wipeout	★★★★★
Cyber Sled	★	Magic Carpet	★★★	Ridge Racer	★★★★★	Wipeout 2097	★★★★★
CyberSpeed	★	Mickey's Wild Adventure	★★★★	Ridge Racer Revolution	★★★★★	World Cup Golf	★★
D	★★	Mortal Kombat 3	★★★★	Road Rash	★★	Worms	★★★
Darkstalkers	★★★	Mortal Kombat Trilogy	★★★★	Robotopit	★	WWF Wrestlemania	★★★★
Defcon 5	★★	Motor Toon GP 2	★★★	Robotron X	★★	Ultimate Parodius Deluxe	★★
Descent	★★★★★	Myst	★	Sampras Extreme Tennis	★★★★★	X-Com	★★★★
Die Hard Trilogy	★★★★★	Namco Museum V1	★★			Zero Divide	★★
Discworld	★★★						
Disruptor	★★★★						

Command & Conquer

PUBLISHER: Virgin
STYLE: Strategy
PRICE: £44.99

[1] Once you've set-up your base (centre) it's time to build barracks to train your men. **[2]** In some missions you will only have limited resources to complete your task. Gung-ho tactics won't work.



amassing your forces so are the opposition. Everything happens in real time (no waiting for your enemy to have a turn) so as you direct your forces via a pointer towards the enemy base, the enemy may well be circling round to attack your own camp! To cram everything in your soldiers are presented in miniature fashion. Although this isn't stunningly pretty there are some excellent touches, like the marine



puffing on his cigar and tank turrets rotating. Sound samples add to the effect. The challenge is very high indeed with 56 missions in all for you to undertake but, so as not to frighten away first timers, the difficulty level builds gradually. What we have here is an amazingly in-depth strategy game that is easily accessible to anyone who can be bothered to get their grey matter ticking over. Great value for money. ★★★★★



[1] The square cursor lets you select and direct your forces. **[2]** Rendered sequences add atmosphere. **[3]** Discretion is the better part of valour as you are surrounded. Pull-out and re-group.

Victory Boxing

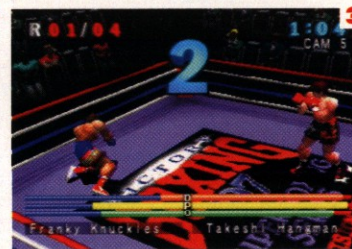
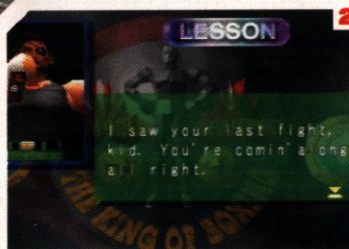
PUBLISHER: JVC
STYLE: Boxing sim
PRICE: £44.99

[1] Standing toe-to-toe for some sparring practice. Better learn those punch combos. **[2]** Your coach lets you know exactly how the practice session went. **[3]** The real test comes with a hostile opponent when you risk getting KO'd.



An intelligent fighting game sounds like a contradiction in terms (what next, a slow racing game?) but *Victory Boxing* proves that such an abnormality is not only possible, but eminently desirable. The rather novel idea behind this game is that you can create your own boxer and then train them to fight in a variety of

different styles, gradually honing your protege's skills as you take on each new opponent. In the ring, play becomes unexpectedly strategic. Punching isn't just a matter of pressing the right buttons, you need the stamina behind each blow to inflict any real damage. Go in swinging haymakers all over the shop and you'll soon end up with



A round-up of all the best recent releases:

[1] You choose who to fight next, check your opponent's stats. **[2]** Onto the real match-up. Pecs like Peter Andre.

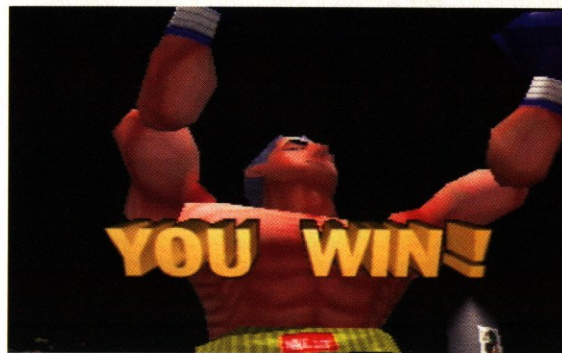


not enough puff to knock down a featherweight. The trick is to bide your time and use the wide range of punches and moves at your disposal. Barge in for a quick flurry



of jabs and hooks and then put your guard up while you recover your strength. Keep taunting your opponent with bodyblow after bodyblow and then, just before he tries to plant one on your temple, wind up a super punch to send him sprawling to the canvas. Initially not as rewarding as the two Tekkens, this offers even more long-term challenge. It looks stunning with an excellent replay option for re-living that special knock-out moment. But it's the ability to develop your fighter before each contest that makes Victory Boxing that bit special. Painfully real.

★★★★



Keep your guard up, save your punching power for some big hits and you too could hoist your polygon arms aloft.

PUBLISHER: Konami

STYLE: Arcade football

PRICE: £44.99

International Superstar Soccer Deluxe

Most PlayStation football games sell their soul in pursuit of realism with only Actua Soccer really pulling it off. ISSD, on the other hand, neatly sidesteps the whole issue of realistic presentation and goes straight for super-fast play and plenty of super-goals. The cartoony presentation might look simplistic but the game beneath is ingeniously complex. To start with you'll just pass the ball around and have a pop at the goalie from outside the box. Soon though you'll discover the speed-up button that makes play so exciting. Turn a defender and press it and you'll suddenly be graced with a burst of



speed that can scythe a defence in two. But this move isn't all powerful, you can't change direction or get in as powerful an end-shot and too much leg-work will tire your player out. In fact, every player has different attributes and skills, giving you the opportunity to arrange your squad to fit your own style. Delve deeper and you'll find a

wealth of strategy options that you can access as you play too, allowing you unprecedented control over your players. So what are the draw-backs? Well, for one thing ISSD only has international teams. Another problem is that it's basically identical to the SNES classic. Still, if you're after a footy game that's more Roy of the Rovers than Four-Four-Two ISSD is the business. Perfectly complements your copy of Actua - but ISS Pro, out this Summer, could be even better.

★★★★



[1] Studs up lads! The goalies are tough to beat, take their skill level down a notch or two to get more goals. **[2]** What? It's no use complaining mate, being programmed in Japan the refs are, in a word, harsh. Luckily there is a non-sliding tackle to avoid those red cards.

[1] Before you play select what formation you want and who goes forward for an attack. **[2]** Shoot from an angle to improve your chance of scoring. **[3]** Picking up the rebound quickly is essential. **[4]** Each player possesses nine attributes. **[5]** Dawdle on the ball and risk having it plucked off your feet. **[6]** An open invitation to score.



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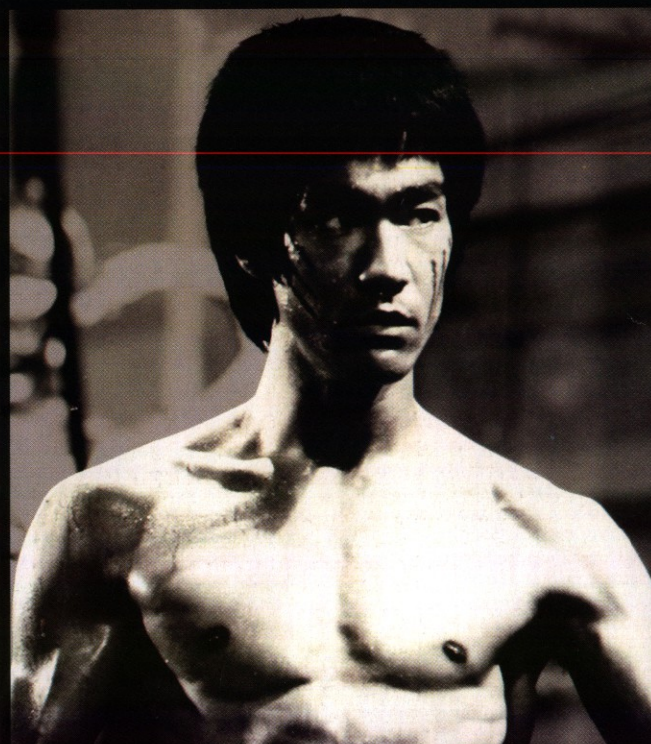
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
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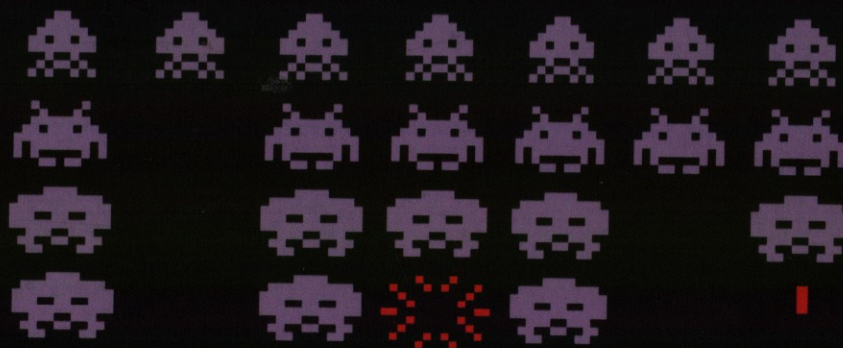


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